Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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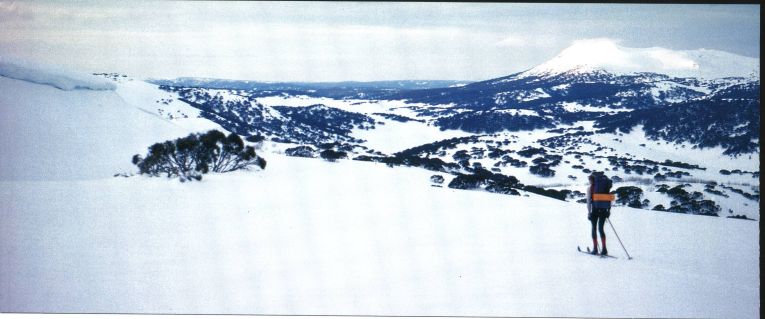
$4.95* Autumn (April May June) 1988, issue 28



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AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Autumn (April May **June**) 1988, Vol 8 No 2 (issue **28**) $NZ5.95* **$4.95**

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Cover Reflection. This tired bushwalker seems to be wondering whether to simply topple into Victoria's Snowy River, pack and all! Photo Andrew Brookes. **Contents** Damp conditions in Danae Brook. (See the Blue Mountains Canyons Guide starting on page 44.) Photo Steve Prothero. *Maximum recommended retail price only.

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Tom Millar *Cross Country Skiing*
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Editorial

A Cause for Celebration?

● RECENT MONTHS HAVE SEEN A PUBLIC ORGY of superficial introspection and self-congratulation. The Press and, of course, politicians have taken the lead in this 'bicentennial two-step'. Public money has been lavished on a multitude of 'celebration' activities, many of the 'land rights for gay whales' variety.

However, a more critical examination of the effects of 200 years of European settlement on this continent, particularly on the landscape, is called for. We must attempt to assess possible future effects if the present course is continued.

An initial desire to conquer and subdue the land, and its native people, soon broadened into an attitude of commercial exploitation. Australia was seen as a vast land of limitless resources. This attitude persists today, despite the fact that, due to technological advances and population growth, it is no longer tenable.

Much has appeared recently about the devastating effects of European settlement on Aboriginal life and culture. The national conscience appears to be stirring at last. There are also signs of a new interest in 'conservation'. However, it appears to be a case of too little, too late and of the 'cure' often either being worse than the disease or merely obscuring its symptoms.

Australian tree cover has declined significantly since 1788. Initially largely due to clearing for pasture, the destruction of Australian native forests, for timber and paper products, has proceeded at an alarming rate in the past generation. Already this has left a legacy of soil erosion, salinity problems, the extinction of species of flora and fauna, and a marked decline in the standard of wilderness recreation. Yet we continue to pay lip service to recycling and finding alternative resources as the forests are systematically plundered for Japanese woodchips and furniture for Parliament House. It doesn't require a doctorate in forestry to work out that if existing practices continue, there won't be any native forests left in 200 years.

Similarly, if we continue the contamination of our environment at the present rate there will be few 'natural' places remaining in 200 years. We dump toxic and indestructable waste into the land, sea, and air at a rate that the environment cannot sustain. Our natural resources are disappearing before our eyes.

Last issue I discussed the dilemma of enjoying Australia's wild places without destroying them. Like responsible conservation organizations and bushwalking clubs, we at *Wild* believe that the long-term hope for the remaining wild places is to help people to experience them gently, to realize their intrinsic value, and to fight for the survival of these places as they are. Also like conservation organizations, we believe that general route descriptions to a variety of such places made available to committed bushwalkers and other wilderness lovers is a good way to achieve this. (For many years both the Wilderness Society and particularly the Hobart Walking Club have published freely-available information, including route guides, on remote parts of that State.)

Chris on Harman Pass, Arthurs Pass National Park, New Zealand, during a recent walk. Sue Baxter

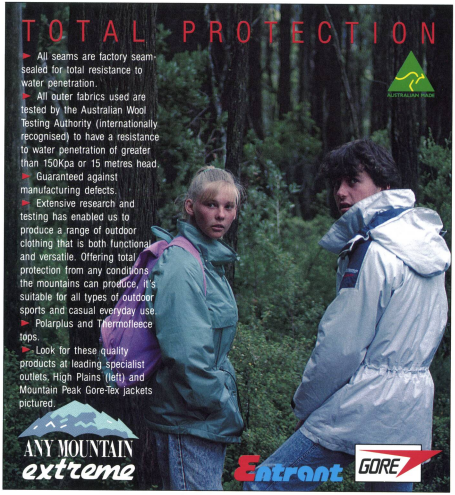
The crucial question concerns the extent and form of this exposure. Exploitation of the environment for tourism has, ironically, become its latest threat. Not only have rapacious and short-sighted private enterprises mounted this bandwagon, but government particularly seeks to make money, and political mileage, out of our remaining wild places. Having little regard for the intrinsic value of wild places, they are apparently incapable of seeing that wholesale marketing of them for the masses is destroying the 'raw material' of the product they are trying so hard to sell. Then, of course, it is 'necessary' to have a plethora of bureaucratic rules, restrictions and red tape to control the large numbers they have persuaded to experience 'wilderness' in the first place.

The first 200 years have not been very encouraging. If the environment is to exist in anything like its original form after the next 200 years, education and self-regulation will have to play a much bigger role than we've seen to date.

●

With this issue there is a small increase in *Wild's* cover price, the first increase for over two years. At the same time we are increasing some of our rates of payment to contributors.

Chris Baxter
Managing Editor



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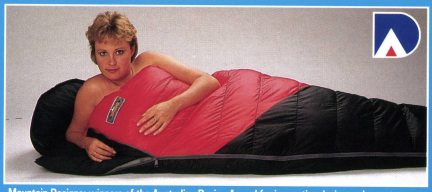

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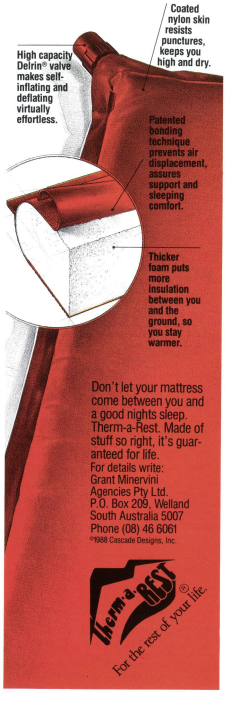

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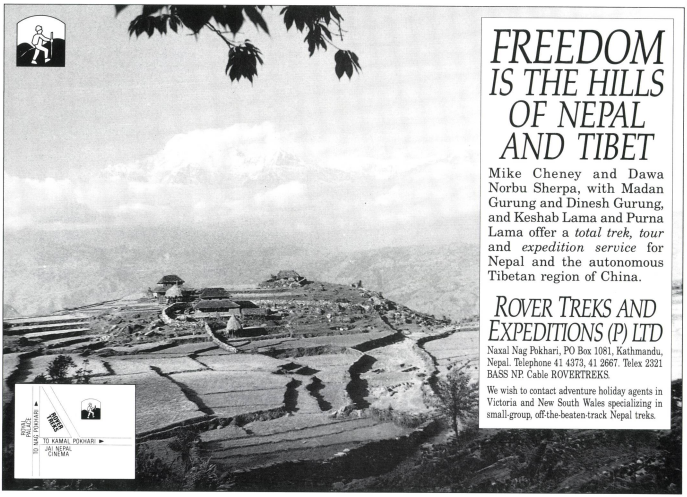

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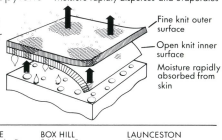

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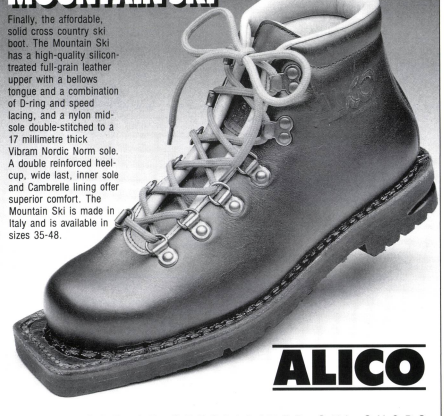

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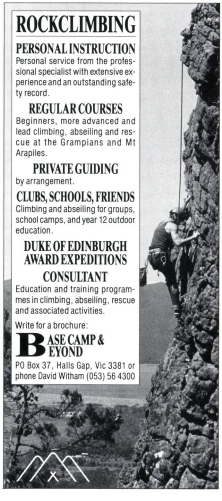
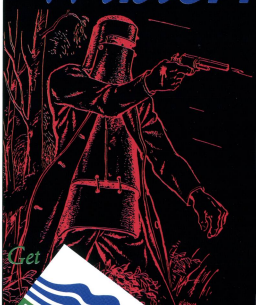


Wilderness Armour



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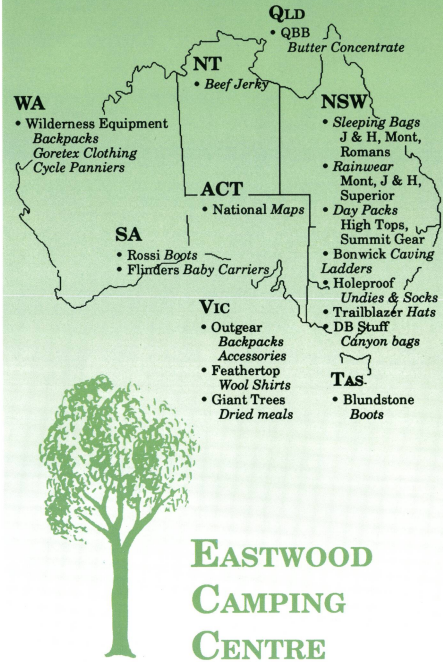

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Victories for Australian Forests

Wild Information

● **Forests.** The Victorian Government's decision on 11 November on the extension of National Parks in East Gippsland has been hailed by the Wilderness Society as 'a major victory for the conservation movement'. The government adopted and in fact added to the Land Conservation Council's recommendations that 10,000 hectares of new forest parkland be provided in East Gippsland, and that new areas be declared. The areas to be made new National Parks include the Errinundra Plateau and the Coopracambra Range, and there will be an extension to the Snowy River National Park. The government also announced that it would seek World Heritage listing for the new parks which, if accepted, would make them the first World Heritage areas in Victoria. However, not all National Estate forest has been protected, and the goverment has decided to call for expressions of interest in a pulp mill at Orbost.

The East Gippsland decision has been condemned by both the Australian Council of Trade Unions and sawmillers who claim that the decision will put up to 400 people out of work, a figure that the government says is exaggerated.

The ACTU has lobbied the Federal Government in support of a new forestry industry plan drawn up by the Forest and Forestry Products Industry Council. The plan outlines a strategy aimed at turning the forest industry into a net exporter while remaining a major employer. In November the forest industry established a new national pressure group, the Forest Protection Society, to counter the political strength of the conservation movement.

Also in November, the Federal Government announced large cuts in protection to the paper, pulp and printing industries. Associated Pulp and Paper Mills has been quoted in the Press as describing the decision 'as a savage blow to . . . fine paper manufacturing', and had earlier claimed that a reduction in protection would cost it $12 million in profit. The decision was also criticized by a spokesman for the Amalgamated Works Union.

In early February a storm broke over the ALP when it was revealed that, in June 1987, it had accepted a $10,000 donation from Harris–Daishowa, a Japanese company engaged in woodchipping on the NSW south coast. According to a report in Melbourne's *Age* newspaper, the money was donated to the ALP in support of the Labor Party's (southern NSW) election campaign. (The company had been fighting a battle with local conservationists.) However, the donation was not disclosed by the ALP (as the law requires in respect of election donations of over $1,000). In acknowledging the gift, the ALP wrote to the company saying that the money would help the NSW branch of the ALP in its administration. Ironically, the matter was revealed by NSW Minister for the Environment, Bob Carr, attempting to score points against the NSW Liberal Party over its acceptance of a $10,000 donation from Harris–Daishowa which the Liberals had publicly listed. The next day the company revealed it had also given $10,000 to the ALP and demanded the return of the money. A day later the money was returned.

● **Kit.** After some two years of work, particularly by its Education Officer, Tracey Diggins, the Wilderness Society's education kit, *Wilderness: the Original and the Best of Planet Earth*, was launched in Melbourne by the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke. (See Reviews.)

● **Kakadu.** A report in the September 1987 issue of *Land Rights News* claimed that the number of tourists visiting the Kakadu area, Northern Territory, climbs by 30% every tourist season. It added that over 200,000 people visted the area in the 1987 dry season.

In the December issue of *Land Rights News* it was reported that the Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service is phasing out commercial fishing in Kakadu National Park.

● **Katherine.** The long-running claim by Jawoyn Aborigines to land which includes the Northern Territory's famous Katherine Gorge has been recognized in Land Commissioner Kearney's report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gerry Hand. Kearney has recommended that half of the original claim, including Katherine Gorge, be recognized. Apparently only half of the present area of the Katherine Gorge is included in the recommended area. From the outset the Jawoyn have publicly maintained their support for the area remaining as a National Park.

● **Open Season.** Conservationists have expressed concern at the Northern Territory Government's proposed Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment Bill. The main objection is to the deregulation of the permit system allowing the 'taking' of listed fauna that are 'not endangered'. Under the proposed regulations an animal may be 'delisted' as endangered at the discretion of the NT Conservation Commission, without the opportunity for public comment.

● **Queensland Rainforest.** The Greater Daintree Action Group and the Daintree Blockade Information Centre have recently produced the *Blockade Report*, a 40-page submission to the Federal Government World Heritage Inquiry regarding the future of the track between Cape Tribulation and the Bloomfield River in the Daintree region of north Queensland. Among its recommendations, the report has called for the closure of the track and the encouragement of natural regrowth on it.

The Wilderness Society's Tracey Diggins and the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, at the launch of the society's new education kit. Wilderness Society collection

Well-known Queensland conservationist Marcel Morain, editor of *Contact* (see report in *Wild* no 27) seeks donations to assist in the establishment of the International Centre for Rainforest Ecology east of Malanda on the Atherton Tablelands. Morain has purchased land for the centre in one of Queensland's threatened rainforest areas.

● **Eruption.** A conservation battle is being waged over north Queensland's Mt Etna, near Rockhampton, because a big cement company wants to continue operations at its long-running limestone quarry there. (As we went to press heavy criticism of the Australian cement industry was reported in the national Press. It was alleged that the industry has received favoured treatment following deals with trade unions and government.) Mt Etna contains an extensive limestone cave system containing formations of great beauty. One of the caves is said to house more than 80% of the known Australian population of bent-winged bats. Another Mt Etna cave is said to be used for breeding by the rare ghost bat. Blasting has damaged a number of formations in the caves. A compromise 'solution' announced in January by Queensland Premier Mike Ahern was described by conservation leader Bob Brown as 'hopeless'.

● **NSW Park News.** The NSW Government has announced a number of small additions to National Parks in that State, including some 1,300 hectares to Warrumbungle National Park. More significantly, it announced the proposed establishment of two major National Parks. The 129,000 hectare Yengo National Park, north-

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west of Wisemans Ferry, will complete the ring of sandstone National Parks which surround metropolitan Sydney. Including the previously unprotected Macdonald Wilderness, the area has lost some of its wilderness quality in recent years due to indiscriminate logging and illegal removal of bush rock, but conservationists are hopeful that restoration of the area can now proceed. Kings Plains National Park, on the western side of the New England Tablelands, will be in two separate parts, both on Kings Plains Creek.

The NSW Government has announced that it will spend $3.6 million on 'rainforest conservation' in 1987–8, which it claims is over $1 million more than was allocated for 1986–7. Of the $3.6 million, it is claimed that approximately $800,000, or less than a quarter, has been set aside for the acquisition of new rainforest areas for inclusion in National Parks.

Another announcement by the NSW Government concerns the introduction of 'Australia's first State-wide koala management plan'.

● **NSW Wilderness Bill Enacted.** The first Wilderness Act in Australia has been passed by the NSW Parliament. The act, which provides for the National Parks & Wildlife Service to enter into agreements with other land management agencies in order to protect wilderness areas under their control, passed through Parliament late in 1987.

Conservation groups have hailed the act as a major breakthrough in their campaign for complementary wilderness protection legislation throughout Australia. With the passing of the NSW Wilderness Act, pressure will be placed on other States to match the NSW initiative. It is believed that South Australia will follow suit by 1989.

Roger Lembit

● **Endangered Species Act for NSW?** With election fever in NSW hotting up, the Premier, Barrie Unsworth, has announced that his government will introduce an Engangered Species Bill which will aim to protect the habitat of species threatened with extinction. Unsworth stated that the legislation would provide for the protection of endangered invertebrate species (such as butterflies) which were not presently recognized in any NSW fauna legislation.

It will also provide compensation in the form of tax relief to affected property owners and provide for the preparation of management plans for endangered species.

The Liberal/National Party Coalition had previously announced its intention to introduce similar legislation.

RL

● **No Energy.** The (Federal Government) Department of Resources and Energy, of which the Division of National Mapping (Natmap) was a part, has been abolished. Natmap was placed in the Department of Administrative Services and subsequently amalgamated with the Australian Survey Office. These two organizations were renamed the Surveying and Land Information Group, Department of Administrative Services.

● **Irreplaceable Wilderness Photos Stolen.** When a hire care was stolen in central Sydney on 19 November 1987 renowned Victorian wilderness photographer David Tatnall (see Folio in *Wild* no 20, and *Wild* Information in *Wild* no 24) lost not only some $13,000 worth of equipment, but a collection of irreplaceable slides of East Gippsland bush. The equipment was in five aluminium transport cases all stencilled 'Tatnall'. It included two Rollei projectors, two stereo amplifiers and other audio-visual equipment. Anyone who has any knowledge of the whereabouts of these goods should contact the Sydney office of the Wilderness Society—(02) 267 7929.

Barry Higgins, left, and Steve Tremont slacking on the job during their 6,700 kilometre walk of the Great Divide. Paddy Pallin collection

● **Bounding Outdoors.** Two Snowy River expeditions being conducted by the Australian Outward Bound Foundation during February and April will include both able-bodied and disable people, including 15 from the USA. Activities include bushwalking/wheeling, bushcraft, bush cooking, abseiling, canoeing and rafting.

● **Baroque on the 'bidgee.** To entice you away white-water rafting, Off the Edge Expeditions has enlisted the aid of a gourmet chef and a string trio (playing Handel's Water Music, of course).

● **Down the Gurgler.** In October 1987 it was announced in the Press that Wildtrek Ltd and its associated adventure travel organization Peregrine Adventures had ceased trading following their collapse which left hundreds of thousands of dollars owing. Creditors have been informed that they are likely to receive little, if any, of the money owing to them. At the time of the collapse, the group's founder and Managing Director, Bob Ashford, was quoted in the Press as attributing the collapse to a loss of confidence in the company resulting from a legal action between it and rival adventure holiday group, World Expeditions, reported in *Wild* no 27. The name Peregrine was subsequently purchased, together with other assets of the company, and continues to be used in connection with adventure holidays.

● **Walking the Great Divide.** Long-distance bushwalkers Barry Higgins and Steve Tremont (see *Wild* no 27, page 17) are making good progress in their attempt to follow Australia's Great Dividing Range from western Victoria to Cape York in north Queensland. After 123 days of continuous bushwalking the pair passed the small township of Walcha near Armidale in northern New South Wales on 20 January. They had covered 2,400 kilometres of their 6,700 kilometre walk. Carrying rucksacks of up to 45 kilograms, Higgins and Tremont hope to reach Cape York late in November. To maintain their schedule the pair are averaging 30 kilometres a day.

● **The Future of Canoeing?** The Victorian Amateur Canoe Association has launched a scheme to introduce juniors to all areas of canoeing—five competitive disciplines, and touring. The scheme is called the Junior Paddle Power Achievement Awards and is open to all schools, groups and individuals. It 'is designed as an active, step-by-step progression through the skills of canoeing . . . Students gain a wide knowledge of canoeing . . . (and can) progress at their own rates'. Further information is available from John Jacoby: phone (03) 489 5078.

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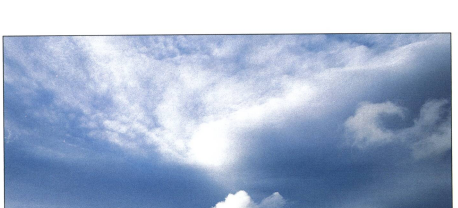
Tasmania

Treseder does classic trips in staggering times

● **Treseder in Tasmania.** It was perhaps just as well that Peter Treseder didn't stay in Tasmania for the Mountain Marathon, as the previous month he completed two major Tasmanian trips in a total time of under 50 hours.

First was a return trip from Scotts Peak Dam involving traverses of the Western and Eastern Arthur Ranges, an ascent of Federation Peak, a second traverse of the Eastern Arthurs, then a finishing sprint up the Arthur Plains. This little jaunt, one of the most famous walks in Tasmania (and covering rugged terrain) commonly takes walkers 10–12 days or more, but occupied Treseder for less than a day (23 hours 28 minutes)! However, that effort apparently didn't warrant a rest day, as the next day he was rafting the Franklin River, a task disposed of in 26 hours 4 minutes (Collingwood River bridge to Butlers Island).



Tasmania's Western Arthur Range—dispensed with in a few hours by Peter Treseder! David Noble

● **The Plight of Victoria's Wildlife.** The Conservation Council of Victoria, in the summer issue of its quarterly newsmagazine *Environment Victoria,* claims that, 'The Department of Conservation, Forest & Lands has decided that it does not want to protect leadbeaters possum, the State's faunal emblem.' Leadbeaters possums live only in the Marysville–Healesville–Noojee region of Victoria.

The article goes on to state that recently-published government guidelines on preservation of the possum 'have been exposed as worthless by scientific experts and from within the CFL itself'. An author of a definitive study on the possum, David Lindenmeyer, is quoted as saying the guidelines are 'a timber production management plan not a leadbeaters possum management plan'. Another author of the study, Andrew Smith, has said that the possum can live with logging 'provided that sufficient hollow-bearing trees are retained to provide a perpetual supply of nest sites and provided that logged coupes are connected to refuge areas by an unlogged or partially logged corridor'. The government guidelines are quoted as saying that 'the retention of such large numbers of trees (as recommended by Smith) is undesirable due to the loss of timber volume'. Lindenmeyer is quoted as saying that the guidelines contain selective referencing, incorrect extrapolations and unreferenced statements.

The Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands has been criticized for the way it has used the peregrine falcon in its concerted public relations effort aimed at convincing conservationists, and others, of the department's 'faunal sensitivity'. (This is despite what is seen by many as its predilection for encouraging an important source of department revenue, logging, at the expense of wildlife in forest regions.) 'Peregrine falcon nesting' has been used to justify extensive restrictions on access to public land, particularly at popular walking and climbing area, Werribee Gorge. The motives for these restrictions (similar ones are planned for Mt Arapiles—see below) and justifications of the way in which they are applied have been strongly questioned in recent months. To date, rockclimbers have been most affected, but a report in a recent issue of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs newsletter tells of how a walking club group was tackled by an over-zealous Park Ranger for being under suspicion of entering the substantial restricted area at Werribee Gorge (which, in fact, they had not entered). Those most affected by the department's falcon 'protecting' activities, rockclimbers, are a relatively small and unorganized group and are presumably seen by the department as less in need of appeasement than larger and more political groups. The department has apparently changed its tack on the subject of the falcon at Mt Arapiles, the world-famous climbing area in western Victoria. Initially it sought to keep the bird's presence in the area a 'secret' to 'protect' it (presumably from egg-collectors and falconers). In an about-turn, and now that the area is a State Park, the department appears to be attempting to use the peregrine falcon both as a tourist draw-card to the area and as a way of justifying its proposed restrictions on rockclimbing at Mt Arapiles. For example, it features the bird in much of its literature on the new park, including in a large drawing on the cover of the 'Inventory of Resources and Uses' it published when the park was officially opened in December. (An article in a local paper, *The Wimmera Mail–Times,* reporting the opening of the Mt Arapiles–Tooan State Park in December states, 'A climbing ban to protect peregrine falcons is a farce. Senior department officers acknowledge that the bird's main dangers are from poachers and pesticides . . . widespread publication by the department of the bird's exact nesting sites is more likely to imperil the bird than the odd stray climber.')

Whilst peregrine falcons of course commonly nest at sites other than on cliffs, including in tree hollows and in the abandoned nests of other birds, access to rockclimbing cliffs and their environs, only, is normally restricted by the department. (It has been suggested that perhaps this is because the department considers that on account of its logging programme there will soon be too few arboreal sites to bother about!)

The same issue of *Environment Victoria* quoted above also carries a report of how a local conservation group, Aussie Bush Conservation, 'overcame massive bureaucratic indolence' in its success in having aerial baiting with 1080 poison in pine plantations on public land banned. Thousands of hectares of radiata pine have replaced native forests in the Strzlecki Ranges. Until recently, aerial drops of 1080 were used to kill animals, particularly the black-tailed wallaby (a 'protected' native animal) which ate the young pine seedlings.

The Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands has stated, in its 'Proposed Management Plan' for Mt Arapiles, that it is considering reintroducing red-necked wallabies to the area. In the same report it says that it plans to prepare 'a rabbit control programme', possibly including the use of 1080 poison, for Mt Arapiles. (The report states that the red-necked wallaby has not been recorded at Mt Arapiles since 1974, and that the main rabbit-control method used in the area in the past has been 1080.)

An article in the 13 December 1987 issue of the *Times on Sunday* ('National Parks Become a National Disgrace') suggests that the major environmental problem facing Victoria's National Parks is endangered species.

News, early in the year, that the NSW Government was considering banning duck shooting galvanized the Victorian Government into thinking along the same lines. Fear of the consequences of a massive influx of shooters from north of the border was apparently exceeded only by a desire to be seen taking the initiative. However, in the end, the Victorian Government decided to allow the annual duck slaughter to take place in 1988.

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Kiwis Climb Cerro Torre

● **Patagonia.** In October 1987 New Zealanders Russell Braddock and Nick Craddock made the first Australasian ascent of Cerro Torre (3,130 metres) in southern Argentina. One of the world's most spectacular and difficult mountains, Cerro Torre (see photo on page 53 of *Wild* no 10) was first climbed in 1959. The New Zealanders climbed the South-east Ridge at their second attempt, doing the last two pitches in the dark, and spending most of the night descending. The ascent was only the seventeenth of the peak, and is a significant milestone in New Zealand mountaineering history. (We expect to publish an article on the ascent, by Nick Craddock, in the next issue.)

The New Zealanders went on to climb the Super Couloir on nearby FitzRoy, a climb rated by Craddock as even harder than Cerro Torre. They traversed the peak by descending the American Route. (The only previous Australasian ascent of FitzRoy was in 1979, when Craddock and Nick Kagan, a UK expatriate residing in New Zealand, climbed the American Route.)

Colin Monteath

● **Managing?** An article in the December issue of *Parkwatch* (the official journal of the Victorian National Parks Association) on the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands states that, 'The public is not yet experiencing better park management, and the doubt still remains as to whether it ever will.' It goes on to add, 'The VNPA has found some regions (regional sections of the department) hypersensitive to constructive criticism and unwilling to admit deficiencies. Unless regions are prepared to concede that parks are not being managed as well as they were before CFL, there is little hope of improvement.' (The first Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands took office in September 1983.)

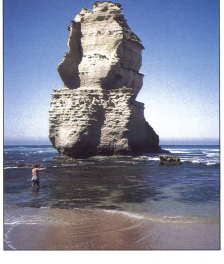
● **'Harvesting Plan'.** A euphemism for logging, this phrase is part of the title of a recently released report by Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands. As the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs puts it (in describing the report), 'Translated, this means that they intend to log an area of 30–40 square kilometres in the Gibbo–Pinnibar region, parallel and very close to the Alpine Walking Track.'

(The department has recently confirmed that the Alpine Walking Track will be re-routed—by Johnnies Top, Buenba Hut, Langtree Hill and the Cobberas—between Dartmouth Dam and Cowombat Flat.)

Following complaints to the department by bushwalkers concerning logging transgressions in East Gippsland's Wabonga Plateau State Park in Easter and November 1987, the department admitted the Easter transgression and reported various results including 'the immediate cessation of logging in the area' and steps taken against the 'licensee' concerned. It appears, however, that some seven months elapsed between the first complaint and this action.

● **No Road.** Victoria's 40,000 hectare Avon Wilderness is to be closed to private vehicles from 18 March. However, 'Tracks on or near the boundary of the Wilderness will be maintained and available for public vehicular access', and other internal vehicle tracks will be maintained for 'management purposes'.

● **There's No Business Like Snow Business.** In October 1987 the over-snow vehicle licence to a local ski-touring business operating on the Bluff (north-east Victoria) expired after four years. Cross country skiers are making a concerted effort to ensure it is not renewed.



Jon Muir wading out to do battle with Mark, the first of the Twelve Apostles to 'fall'. Brigitte Muir

● **Apostolic Succession?** For years climbers have considered, and quickly dismissed, the idea of climbing the Twelve Apostles, crumbling sea-stacks near Port Campbell on the western Victorian coastline. Recently, after an epic encounter with high-angle clay, one was climbed by well-known Australian Himalayan climber, Jon Muir, and his wife, Brigitte, Andrew Collins, and Greg Pritchard.

● **Wilsons Promontory Climbing.** Not previously allowed in this famous Victorian coastal National Park, rockclimbing is now apparently permitted. The imminent publication, by the Victorian Climbing Club, of a rockclimbing guidebook (described in the management plan as a 'private publication') including descriptions of scores of recent climbs in the region no doubt had a bearing on the administrating body's (the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands) change of heart in this matter. (It had earlier failed in an attempt to 'encourage' the editors to omit Wilsons Promontory from the guide.)

However, when the management plan for the area was released last year it was revealed that climbing in the park is to be subject to a permit system and permitted (only?) at sites where 'the activity does not create management problems', and 'particular environmental or conservation values are not affected'. The possibility of such a system being used as a precedent for possible expansion into other parks and to other activities (cross country skiing? canoeing? bushwalking?), not to mention its potential for possible manipulation and abuse, gives grounds for gravest concern.

In an attempt to justify its stance, in the management plan the department lists the 'problems' caused by rockclimbing 'in an intensively used park'. These include 'complaints from other park users', 'public reports of climbers leading to false emergency alarms', 'inexperienced visitors attempting the exploits of experienced climbers', and 'search and rescue requirements and associated costs' (in this connection readers may recall the massive, unsuccessful and vegetation-damaging search for a tourist lost at Wilsons Promonotory in 1987). The plan concludes that these and other 'problems' 'are substantially reduced if climbing occurs only at sites well known to park staff and not in the ready view of the general public'. (This could well rule out every cliff in the park!) Apparently it is intended that this premiss be used as a basis for issuing climbing permits. (Permits are also required for off-track walking.) It is claimed that 'clean (hammerless) climbing' 'can damage vegetation on the face'!

As a postscript, climbers in Victoria's Cathedral Range area were recently informed by a Department Ranger that climbing is not permitted on Bissetts Pinnacles.

● **Grampians Development.** The Fyans Creek valley, in the Grampians, western Victoria, has been selected as the site for a $1 million Aboriginal 'cultural centre'. Work has commenced on the project, described as 'a two-pronged community and tourism centre'. The centre will include a park headquarters for the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands.

● **Three Peaks.** The Australian Three Peaks Race, to be held in Tasmania at Easter 1989, involves 585 kilometres of sailing, 134 kilometres of running and a total ascent of 3,250 metres. The event, which involves climbs of Mts Strzlecki (Flinders Island), Mt Graham (Freycinet Peninsula) and Mt Wellington, has reportedly already attracted a number of overseas entrants.

● **Mountain Marathon.** The Silva–Karrimor two-day Mountain Marathon, held in Tasmania's Central Highlands on January 16 and 17, as part of the APPM Asia–Pacific Orienteering Championships, attracted 200 competitors, many from overseas.

The event was blessed with unusually hot weather which made 'snake jumping' and heatstroke the biggest hazards of the arduous event. One hundred two-person teams, with each person carrying a ten kilogram pack, covered 68, 41, or 25 kilometres, depending on which of three divisions they had entered.

The top team, Roger Nicoll (ACT) and Ross Burnett (Canada) completed the 68 kilometre course in 11 hours 21 minutes. Victorians Eddie Wymen and Jack Davis were first to finish the 41 kilometre course (6 hours 14 minutes), and Swedes Kjell Ehrencrona and Jorgen Ters were first home on the 25 kilometre course (4 hours 23 minutes).

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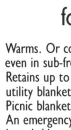

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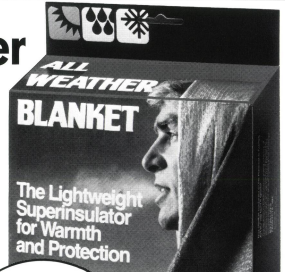

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Wild Information

● **Mt Arapiles 'Charade'.** When the Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, Joan Kirner, arrived to officially open the Mt Arapiles–Tooan State Park on 17 December she was greeted by banner-waving protestors. A photograph in the *The Wimmera Mail–Times* shows a group with a large banner reading, 'No more lies, Mrs Kirner'. A deputation of local residents and climbers presented Kirner with a petition calling for district representation on a committee of management for the park, and protested at work that had been done in the area since the announcement that it was to become a State Park. A local resident gave Kirner an open letter, published in *The Wimmera Mail–Times*, in which the proposed management plan (released at the park opening) was described as a 'charade'. The letter asked, 'Why is it that so many "improvements" have been done by your department without consultation with the public and before approval of any management plan? . . . Why publish a management plan if it is pre-empted by several months? As a consequence, can we be assured that public comments during the next three months will be properly considered, or simply . . . ignored?'

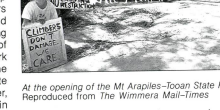
In addition to those noted above, proposals include permitting only eight named recreational activities in the park, the possible closure of Campbells Kingdom (a major cliff with scores of climbs) for up to five months a year on account of 'nesting peregrine falcons', a six-week limit on camping, and a number of 'developments' including the construction of a new fire tower on the summit and a new camping ground and toilets. A full-time ranger is being appointed. It is propsed that commercial rockclimbing instruction courses will require a permit. The public has up to 25 March to comment on the proposals. (Write to the department at PO Box 487, Horsham, Vic 3400.)

● **Cradle Huts.** The controversial system of private, 'chalet-style' huts with all 'mod cons' on Tasmania's famous Overland Track opened in January, for the exclusive use of clients of a private company charging $695 a head for the guided walk.

● **Shannon Victory.** On 22 October 1987 a motion allowing the declaration of the Shannon Karri National Park passed through the Upper House of the Western Australian Parliament. This event culminated 12 years of struggle by conservationists.

● **Mountain Chemicals.** A report in the 12 November 1987 edition of *New Scientist* tells how it is hoped that a chemical compound, called Solidry, developed in Sweden could solve the increasing erosion of foot-tracks by walkers' boots. When mixed with soil, the compound forms a solid and durable surface. Solidry is being tested on part of the Pennine Way, the UK's most popular walking route. It is claimed that Solidry poses no risks to plants or wildlife.

● **Logging Niugini.** Conservationists have revealed that in the New Ireland province of Niugini only an estimated 30% of the original forest cover remains. They claim that if felling continues at the present rate forests in the province will disappear within 15 years. They also claim that the situation in other parts of Niugini is also grim.



At the opening of the Mt Arapiles–Tooan State Park. Reproduced from *The Wimmera Mail–Times*

● **Antarctica.** Conservation organization Project Jonah fears that a return to commercial whaling is 'just around the corner' with a Japanese fleet in Antarctica to slaughter 300 whales as part of a scientific experiment.

A Canadian organization, Adventure Network International, has announced that it is operating the first tourist flights to the South Pole—for $US34,950 (not including air fare to Chile)!

● **Australians in the Himalayas.** The attempt on the South Pillar of Mt Everest (8,848 metres) reported in *Wild* no 27 was beaten back at about 8,000 metres by high winds, with one member suffering frostnip.

The two Australian members of that expedition, Jon Muir and Mike Rheinberger, are part of the large Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition currently attempting Mt Everest (see *Wild* no 25). The three objectives of that expedition are: 1 to get at least one team to the summit by the South Col route, 2 to enable another team to traverse the mountain by the West Ridge and the South Col, and, 3 to enable as many members as possible to reach the summit by the South Col route. The expedition is led by Austin Brookes and includes 18, mostly very experienced, Australian mountaineers. No Sherpas are being used, but artificial oxygen is being carried for those climbers who choose to use it.

● **Corrections/Amplifications.** On page 19 of *Wild* no 26 the names of the winners of the marathon section of the 1987 Wildtrek Winter Classic were mixed up but were given correctly on page 22 of the following issue—John Harris and Robert Russell.

On page 25 of *Wild* no 27 we quoted an ABC report that Michael Groom and John Colton had to be assisted by an American expedition after their ascent of Kangchenjunga. Groom has subsequently informed us, however, that he and Colton reached Base Camp unaided.

On page 47 of *Wild* no 27 the positions of the photos were inadvertently swapped.

Because only limited space was available, the recent *Wild* down sleeping bag survey (*Wild* no 27, page 81) included only a small selection of sleeping bags from each manufacturer's range. The Paddy Pallin Twynam (missplelt in the survey) has a complete draught collar—not at the top only as indicated in the survey. For reasons discussed in the survey text, Paddy Pallin does not quantify its sleeping bag temperature ratings but instead specifies the intended use of its sleeping bags.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send contributions to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Minimum Impact Bushwalking

Going there without showing wear, with *Tim O'Loughlin*

● TASMANIA'S WILDERNESS, PERHAPS MORE than anywhere else in Australia, has been a battleground for environmental issues. The controversy over which areas should be within National Parks will no doubt continue. Yet even as these battles rage, a new, unexpected battle looms. It is between those who love and enjoy wild country and the wild country itself.

On parts of the heavily used muddy routes in Tasmania, people walking more and more widely to avoid bogs have created 'tracks' up to 20 metres wide—much wider than the average forestry road! At some wilderness campsites, campers have cut live King Billy and pencil pines—trees over 1,000 years old—to supply a scant night's firewood. Worse still, too many of the camp fires have escaped, devastating sensitive wilderness areas.

And the damage doesn't stop there. The incidence of gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea at high-use camps on the Overland Track is increasing, alpine tarn ecosystems are being destroyed through the use of soap and detergent, and rubbish is left behind at huts and along the track.

Walk on hard surfaces wherever possible, particularly in alpine areas. ***Right****, the author demonstrating that stoves are cleaner, faster and easier to use in wet weather than campfires!* All uncredited photos Rob Blakers

All these problems are impacts that the environment cannot support. Sometimes they come from a lack of knowledge by walkers, at other times simply from sheer weight of walker numbers. There are a number of standard responses by park managers to such problems. These include closing off areas to allow them to regenerate, imposing number limits on walkers, and 'hardening' the environment to allow it to take more use. However, there is another way, one which does not restrict access or artificially 'beef-up' the environment—minimal impact bushwalking.

In many cases, minimal impact techniques enable walkers to avoid or significantly reduce the problems they often unwittingly cause. If we are to avoid 'loving the wilderness to death', this knowledge will become as essential to its survival as a tent or sleeping bag is to ours.

So what is minimal impact bushwalking and how can we use it to limit our impact? It is not a strict set of rules and regulations but more an ethic or way of thinking. The main thing to keep in mind is the aim of 'travelling through the wilderness in a way that does the least harm to the environment'. We must develop a constant awareness of the effects our actions are having on the environment. There are a number of things to think about both before leaving and as you walk.

Before you go . . .

Walking equipment has undergone a revolution in the past 20 years, and much of the modern gear also serves a minimal impact function. For overnight walks, as well as your usual bushwalking gear, take the following:

A good tent, with built-in floor, good seam-sealing and tent poles. Carrying your own tent poles eliminates the need to cut saplings for poles as was done in the old days. A floor and seam-sealing means you won't need to dig drainage ditches—if you've sited the tent correctly.

A fuel stove and fuel. If used properly these will virtually eliminate the risk of your starting a wildfire. They are also quicker, cleaner, easier to use in the rain, and they don't leave scars on the landscape.

A sleeping mat. This gives better insulation and harbours fewer biting insects than the old practice (now illegal in National Parks) of cutting ferns or other soft vegetation for a mattress.

A lightweight plastic trowel, for burying faecal waste. Proper burying of waste removes one of the major causes of gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea amongst bushwalkers—its importance cannot be overstressed.

No potential rubbish. Avoid bottles, cans and excess wrappings. These are not only heavy but all too easily end up as part of the rubbish problem.

The right approach is also important:

Go in a small group (6–8 maximum). Larger groups tend to be socially unwieldy, generally have more impact, and make quiet appreciation and sensitivity to the environment more difficult.

Go 'off peak'. The peak walking season is the holiday period from December to February. Not only does walking at other times lead to a less concentrated impact, but there are also the delights of the different seasons, such as the changing fagus leaves in autumn, or snow in winter.

Go 'off the beaten track'. If you must go at peak times try some of the less frequented places. This again further spreads the impact and gives the environment more time to recover.

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and even the odd neck-deep bog is available for the discerning walker! The problem is that many tracks were not designed to take the numbers that now walk on them. The Tasmanian National Parks & Wildlife Service is fixing bad areas as funds allow but walkers can help to minimize the damage by:

Staying 'on the right track'. Although it can sometimes be tempting to cut corners on zigzags or make a side track round a bog, it is better to stick to the track. Cutting zigzags promotes erosion and hastens the degradation of the track. Skirting bogs often results in a widening scar that can, with time, become difficult to navigate through.

Choosing your footwear for the walk. In areas where you won't need the protection of heavy lug-sole boots, try the new lighter weight boots with less damaging sole patterns—ones with shallower lugs and rounded heels. Using sandshoes instead of walking boots has, in the past, been viewed with something approaching horror by Tasmanian bushwalkers. But in easy country and season, and around campsites, their comfort and lightness make a welcome relief from boots, as well as doing less damage to the environment.

Choosing where you walk. In untracked areas avoid walking on sensitive vegetation, such as alpine communities and sphagnum bogs. Some of these can take decades to recover. Walk on rocks, sand or hard surfaces wherever possible.

Camping

Campsites are places where many avoidable environmental impacts often occur. Choose sites that won't show you've been there when you leave. Rocky, sandy or hard-packed sites are better than boggy, soft sites. Avoid camping on alpine vegetation, sphagnum moss or soft ground-cover vegetation. Places where people have already camped usually show less impact than clearing a new site—the impacts have already occurred.

Avoid erecting shelters, windbreaks or *'objets d'art'*. Though you may think they look wonderful, they detract from the natural beauty of the wilderness and introduce artificiality into areas that people visit principally because they are not artifical. The same applies to route-marking cairns. Though there is perhaps a case for leaving them along major, difficult-to-find routes, in many areas they are just reminders that people have been there before and as such detract from the wilderness experience.

It is even possible to leave campsites in a better state than when you arrived by removing unsafe or unnecessary fireplaces and by picking up and carrying out other people's litter.

Rubbish

One area where minimal impact philosophy has already proved effective is with regard to rubbish. Not many years ago the bushwalking practice of burning, bashing and burying rubbish was the gospel. However, with the number of walkers today, such a practice would quickly turn campsites into large rubbish pits. Buried rubbish is often dug up by wildlife or exposed by erosion.

The new philosophy of *carrying out what you carried in* has taken over. A small number of walkers still attempt to burn cans or foil packaging in fires and some seem to believe that if you leave the rubbish at a hut the rangers have nothing better to do than to hire a helicopter and fly it out! But for the most part, the new approach works well. There are a few things to watch out for, though:

Organics. Orange peel and banana skins, though organic, take a long time to degrade. Orange peel, in particular, dries into something like old leather. It's better to carry out your organic waste or plan your food so you won't have any. Be particularly careful with seeds. Don't spill your alfalfa sprouts or have a big feed of blackberries before you set out on your walk. Weed species can be easily spread in this way.

Check before you leave a campsite to make sure you haven't missed anything—little bits of silver paper, cigarette butts and other small items are easy to overlook.

Camp fires

The 'burning' question: should you light a camp fire? Inevitably camp fires cause environmental damage; camp fire escapes have devastated forests with trees over 1,000 years old, and visual scarring from fire rings and local damage to vegetation near camp fires are commonplace. On the other hand, gazing into the flames, swapping yarns and warming yourself after a hard day's walk can be one of the real pleasures of bushwalking.

In Tasmania, however, there are a number of areas where good arguments exist against lighting fires:

Highland and rainforest. These areas usually have little or no wood available and what there is rarely burns well. In highland regions trees can take up to centuries to grow a few centimetres because of the harsh climate. The burnt ground left after a campfire is also very slow to recover. Highland and rainforest areas are also the last stronghold of plants derived from the ancient supercontinent of 'Gondwanaland' which broke up the land masses that were destined to become South America, Australia and New Zealand (amongst others) over 50 million years ago. Many of these plants evolved in environments without fire, and can be destroyed by a single outbreak. The stark stags of burnt-out King Billy and pencil pines throughout the wilderness bear silent testimony to this.

Within National Parks, bushwalkers are often the only human source of fires. The problem for rainforest, in particular, and for some highland areas is also compounded by peat.

Peat is made up of dark-coloured, spongy, decayed organic material. Most button grass, some rainforest and many other plant communities in western Tasmania grow on peat. A rough estimate suggests that over half the soils in the western Tasmanian National Parks have a high peat content. Fires lit on peat can burn into the soil and smoulder underground, sometimes for months, before flaring as bushfires in the next hot weather. They are virtually impossible to put out, as the whole area has to be dug up and thoroughly soaked with water.

Unknown to many bushwalkers, there is a *fine of up to $1,000 for people convicted of lighting fires on peat anywhere in Tasmania.* Any dark, spongy soil with a high organic content must accordingly be treated with suspicion, and no fires should be lit on it.

For highland, rainforest and peat areas in particular, but also for National Parks in general, fuel stoves are the easiest and safest way to go. They avoid the peat problem, and unless mishandled they can't start a fire. They don't use up wood around campsites, which can then

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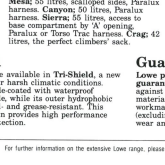

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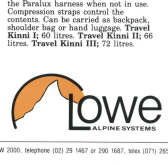

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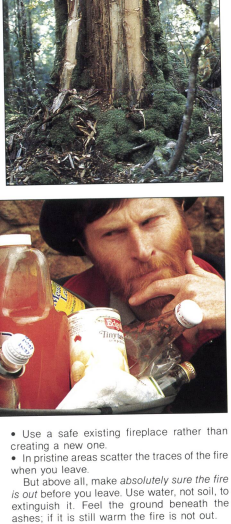
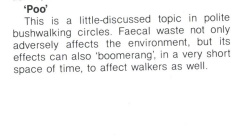
emain a part of the natural ecosystem, and hey don't leave visual scars. In short, they make it a lot easier to leave camps as you found hem.

However, if you can't resist the lure of the lames entirely, and you are in lowland country with abundant wood and a low fire danger:

- Plan your fire for a safe place, *not* in rainforest or peat country.
- Keep it small, and don't put rocks round it (these create another visual scar).
- Use only dead, fallen wood (leave axes and machetes at home).





- Use a safe existing fireplace rather than creating a new one.
- In pristine areas scatter the traces of the fire when you leave.

But above all, make *absolutely sure the fire is out* before you leave. Use water, not soil, to extinguish it. Feel the ground beneath the ashes; if it is still warm the fire is not out.

'Poo'

This is a little-discussed topic in polite bushwalking circles. Faecal waste not only adversely affects the environment, but its effects can also 'boomerang', in a very short space of time, to affect walkers as well.

***Left**, ancient King Billy pine damaged by bushwalkers looking for kindling material.* Tim O'Loughlin. ***Lower left**, save weight, leave packaging at home!* ***Above**, the author testing his patented 'Tasmanian bog survival kit' in a neck-deep section of the South Coast Track, Blowhole Valley, South-west Tasmania. (See cover of* Wild *no 23.)*

Each summer many people complain of gastric problems on the Overland Track, however very few trace the problem back to what they and their fellow walkers are doing wrong.

There are two schools of thought on the cause of the problem. The first suggests that exposed faecal waste is being left too close to huts and camps and is attracting flies. The flies lay eggs in it and then buzz off to land on hut tables or food (which also attracts them), the food is then eaten by walkers who get the dreaded 'lergy'. The second theory suggests that the water is being polluted by people defecating too close to watercourses. Though the evidence to date points to flies being the major problem, either way it comes back to walkers being unaware of the problems 'poo' can cause.

Going to the toilet in the bush, it appears, is a lost art-form. Perhaps centuries of porcelain toilets have deprived walkers of the knowledge of how to do it properly! The proper sequence goes something like this: 1 Urge strikes. 2 If there is a toilet available (as on the Overland Track) use it. 3 If there is no toilet (or if the toilets are full or fly-blown) head at least *100 metres* away from campsites and water. 4 Dig a hole roughly 15 centimetres deep (a lightweight trowel is useful for this). 5 Do the deed. 6 Cover the faecal waste and toilet paper. Bury or carry out sanitary pads and tampons (carry them out if they have a high plastic content). Some people advise burning toilet paper. This can be done, but one bushwalker heeding this advice a few years ago succeeded in burning out 1,400 hectares of the Cradle Mountain—Lake St Clair National Park. It's safer to bury it!

Although 'gastro' may usually be spread by flies, it is still advisable in heavily used areas with small catchments draining into one creek or tarn (such as Pine Valley in the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park) to boil water for at least three minutes before drinking.

The Tasmanian National Parks & Wildlife Service is currently upgrading toilet facilities along the Overland Track and is also conducting a scientific survey of the 'gastro' problem. Ultimately, however, the solution rests with walkers.

Detergents, toothpaste and soap (even biodegradable types) can harm water-life. Try and wash at least *50 metres* away from watercourses, especially enclosed water catchments such as alpine tarns. Scatter the wash water so that it will filter through the soil before returning to the stream or lake. Use gritty sand or a scourer and hot water, rather than soap, to clean dishes.

The ideas in this article are just part of the approach we will all need to adopt if the wilderness is to survive us. Most of it is common sense. Some things involve a little more thought. The common thread, though, is a conscious decision to bushwalk in a way which does the *least* environmental damage. If we can all do this we will be well on the way to keeping the wilderness intact for ourselves, our children and future generations to marvel at. W

LOGAN'S RUN

Murray Parkinson relives the first ascent of Mt Barney, one of Queensland's most rugged peaks

● AN ASCENT OF QUEENSLAND'S MT Barney is an unusual experience for Australian bushwalkers. The mountain is a conglomeration of numerous peaks and ridges, and is a real mountain in the classical sense—not just another high point amongst the sweeping ranges so characteristic of Australia.

From a distance, the sparsely vegetated peaks and precipices of Mt Barney tower above the surrounding terrain. There are many challenging routes with granite slabs and bluffs impeding access to the summits of these high peaks.

Logan Ridge skirts to the north of the daunting cliff-face of Mt Barney's East Peak, and is one of the more difficult routes to its summit. The ridge is so named because the first ascent of Mt Barney was by this ridge, on 3 August 1828 by Captain Patrick Logan, then the commandant of the penal settlement of Brisbane Town.

Accompanying Captain Logan on the ascent were the explorers Cunningham and Fraser. The party began their assault on the mountain at 6 am, and the climbing soon became demanding on endurance and courage. Cunningham and the servants abandoned the climb about two-thirds of the way up the mountain, while Fraser reached his limit some 250 metres below the summit. Captain Logan pushed on and climbed the mountain.

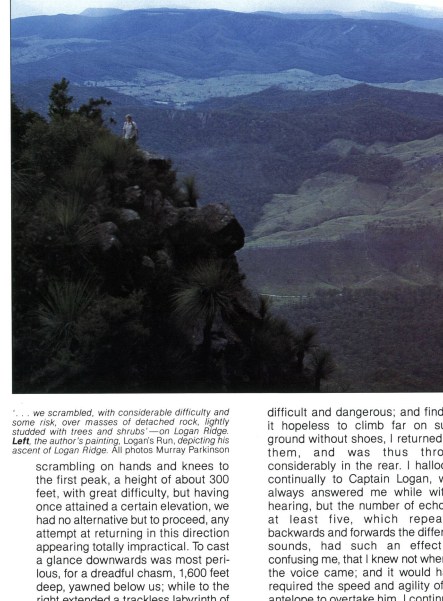
Fraser has left us with an impressive account of the party's assault on the mountain on that day of reckoning. This extract is a redraft from his original diary.

'August 3rd. Morning cold and frosty. At day-break, Captain Logan, Mr Cunningham, two men and I began the ascent of the mountain. On attaining the summit of the ridge, over the lower part of which we had passed yesterday, we found that it conducted to the centre of the mountain's northern front, at an elevation, assuredly, of 2,000 feet from the Logan, which flows at its base. Here that front presents a really terrific appearance, being a perpendicular mass of rock, unvaried by even the smallest trace of vegetation, except a few straggling lichens. From the abovementioned ridge, we scrambled, with considerable difficulty and some risk, over masses of detached rock, lightly studded with trees and shrubs, by which our progress was much aided for about 1,000 feet farther, till we reached the summit of one of the defiles, where, for a while, all further advance seemed to be forbidden. Hence we saw Mount Warning bearing east by south, and about twenty-five miles distant.

'On a careful scrutiny of the fearful precipices which overhung us, Captain Logan detected a path by which it appeared possible to ascend; so, putting off our shoes and stockings, and leaving the rest of the party behind, he and I began scrambling on hands and knees to the first peak, a height of about 300 feet, with great difficulty, but having once attained a certain elevation, we had no alternative but to proceed, any attempt at returning in this direction appearing totally impractical. To cast a glance downwards was most perilous, for a dreadful chasm, 1,600 feet deep, yawned below us; while to the right extended a trackless labyrinth of detached rocks: to look forward was enough to quell the firmest courage, by displaying the dangers and difficulties that beset our path; so that all we could do was, by clinging fast with our toes, to trust ourselves to small nodules on the surface of the crags, and thus to effect an advance by suspending our weight on slender twigs of casuarina and metrosideros, whose appearance scarcely warranted them strong enough to support a goat. When the summit of this peak was gained, my nerves were so much agitated that I was forced to lie down on a rock, resting myself against a bush till I recovered.

'Captain Logan now proceeded towards the next peak, and, as soon as I possibly could, I followed him, leaving my shoes and collecting-bags behind. From the size of the detached portions of rock, and the stunted nature of the shrubs of casuarina, eucalyptus, and banksia, which started up here and there between the fissures, our progress was both difficult and dangerous; and finding it hopeless to climb far on such ground without shoes, I returned for them, and was thus thrown considerably in the rear. I hallooed continually to Captain Logan, who always answered me while within hearing, but the number of echoes, at least five, which repeated backwards and forwards the different sounds, had such an effect in confusing me, that I knew not whence the voice came; and it would have required the speed and agility of an antelope to overtake him. I continued scrambling onwards till half-past eleven, when I perceived Captain Logan near the summit, and then relinquished all hope of joining him; I also struck into a brushwood . . . From the dampness of the earth, I hoped to obtain here some water wherewith to allay my parching thirst, but I was disappointed. Through this brush I at length penetrated, and advanced about 500 feet higher still, when my strength became so exhausted, and the day so far advanced, that after waiting an hour in expectation of seeing Captain Logan, I commenced my descent, the summit of the mountain rearing its gigantic head a full 800 feet above me.

'The descent proved a more difficult task than the climbing had been, from the narrowness of the ridges, in many places not exceeding six feet, with huge precipices on each side, and the danger of slipping between these masses when leaping from one to another, many of them



*'. . . we scrambled, with considerable difficulty and some risk, over masses of detached rock, lightly studded with trees and shrubs'—on Logan Ridge. **Left**, the author's painting, Logan's Run, depicting his ascent of Logan Ridge.* All photos Murray Parkinson

Mt Barney's West Peak.

being slippery as a piece of ice, in which case an instantaneous death must have been my portion. After prodigious exertions, I succeeded in regaining the point where I had left my collecting-bags and shoes, and now I was still more puzzled how to descend thus encumbered; but, mustering all my courage and caution, I began sliding gently from bush to bush, often narrowly escaping being dashed to atoms, and by carefully lowering my boxes and shoes before me from one point to another, I at length got within sight of Mr Cunningham and the rest of the party, by whose assistance I was lowered down the rocks, having almost all my clothes torn off my back.'

On the summit Captain Logan recorded his compass bearings, then descended, rejoining Fraser and Cunningham at 4 pm.

•

An ascent of Logan Ridge can be a bit of a shock for even an experienced bushwalker. What a shock I was in for! While driving towards Yellow Pinch I gazed across to the awesome cliff-face of Mt Barney's East Peak. I felt tense, and I knew the ascent of the big mountain would scare the wits out of me.

At 9 am we walked anxiously along an old timber track towards the base of Logan Ridge. Soon we had ascended the ridge to its juncture with the cliff-face of East Peak. Here the ridge was very narrow, and we enjoyed magnificent views south to Mt Lindesay. After this point I began to think I could see the summit just a little further up. But the mountain continued on and on, further up, one 'summit' after the next.

With the climbing becoming arduous, there was one moment on a granite slab with few footholds where I came close to falling. My friend Noel was more confident on this exposed rock—from a secure foothold, he pulled me across the slab on to a safe ledge. I felt indebted to him.

We reached the summit late in the afternoon. The imminence of nightfall necessitated a quick descent down Peasants Ridge. We were not fast enough—half the descent was made in total darkness, except for the illumination of a solitary pocket-torch, and the starlike beacons of glow-worms mapping out the undulating terrain. We reached the car that night, but were exhausted.

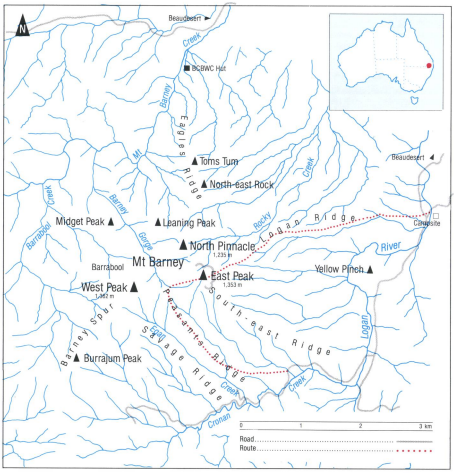
Half-asleep during the drive back to Brisbane, I had visions of mountains looming below me. In the car that night the idea for a painting I have titled *Logan's Run* was born. The picture was subsequently painted from memory.

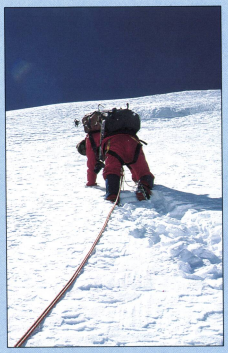
The vantage point of the painting is that of a wedge-tailed eagle, gliding above and looking down upon granite slabs on the North Face of East Peak. Mt Lindesay is depicted on its side in the bottom right-hand corner. North Pinnacle is the large 'octopus head' bulge dominating the scene, and Midget Peak and the slopes of West Peak have been placed to the left of North Pinnacle. Lakes Marroon and Moogerah are located in the background, and the Main Range forms the horizon.

I have depicted our bushwalking party precariously clinging to granite slabs in the foreground. Noel has his foot firmly braced against the trunk of a burnt grass-tree. I have dedicated *Logan's Run* to this sturdy walker.

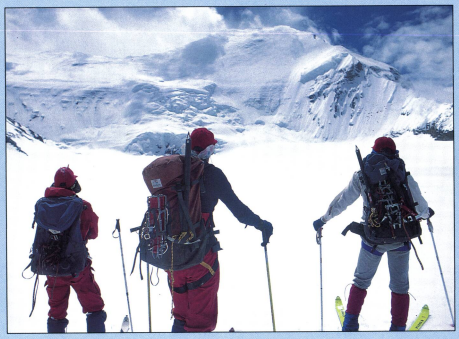
Murray Parkinson (see Contributors in *Wild* no 21) has walked extensively in south-east Queensland, his home State, as well as in NSW and Tasmania. His other main interests are painting, photography and philosophy.

Mt Barney





The ecstacy and the agony. . . success and defeat among the world's highest peaks; by *Rod Turner* and *Tim Macartney-Snape*



AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN CLIMBS

Changtse

● AT 8 PM ON 29 SEPTEMBER 1987 GLEN Nash and I step on to the summit of Changtse, also known as the North Peak of Mt Everest. At 7,500 metres, the sky above is black, we're in a place of extremes. The world falls away below. The endless stretch of the brown Tibetan plains, the stunning beauty of Makalu, and the sheer massiveness of Cho Oyu bear witness to our being on the roof of the world. And there, dominating all, is the sheer massiveness of Chomolungma, truly the Mother Goddess of the World, although compassion and mercy are not among her virtues.

Glen smashes a shaft through the cornice, sees 2,000 metres of daylight and assures me, 'Yes, it's the summit.' We take turns standing on a small snow platform, the East Rongbuk Glacier impossibly far below, Everest brooding behind. We take the essential summit photos we have come so far for. All I can say is, 'I'm worried about the descent.' After ten hours of climbing at the edge of an avalanche, wall-to-wall slabs, 20 breaths per step, no rope—now with utter exhaustion and fading light, I'm worried.

But Glen heads straight down the North Face—the first time climbers have been on it, the awesome verticality stamped

***Top left**, the author climbing above the couloir on the North Face of Changtse.* Glen Nash. ***Top right**, on the summit of Changtse Nash is dwarfed by the flanks of Mt Everest, behind.* Rod Turner. ***Big photo**, expedition members contemplate the North Face of Changtse from 6,100 metres.* Nash

forever in my memories. The whole face is loaded, slabs everywhere, but a straight line is the sum of our preventive measures. However our path avoids the tricky sections of the ascent and we move fast, carrying nothing but our clothing and dreams, the latter having long disappeared in the sheer grinding brutality, the actuality of greater-range climbing.

The author traversing into the base of the Japanese Couloir at 6,700 metres on the North Face of Changtse. ***Right****, camp on the North Face.* Nash

A long way down we separate, our tent visible but still distant, separated from us by a huge avalanche bowl. Glen takes the direct route down and across the bowl reasoning that as I triggered a huge slab with a ski stock plant on the ascent the odds are his way. Me, I'm sick of being an avalanche detector, so it's a long sliding traverse right to drop straight down to the tent. The snow is knee deep and crusted whichever way you go. Thank goodness we each brought a ski pole.

We fade from each other. Alone, it's awesome and more intimidating. No *Boys Own Annual* stuff up here. You can do it or you can't. You're together but alone. The mountain doesn't care. Nothing is conquered but yourself; a rather questionable achievement.

Step after plunge step, my knees feel like they're going to snap but it's no use stopping, it's just a waste of time. And then, the tent, 25 metres down a slight slope, but suddenly I'm falling, my ski pole not even landing for five metres. My left arm whips around and down and I've caught the edge of the lip with the axe, stopped waist-deep with my left foot twisted up behind my hip. A crevasse, it dawns on me. I try to press up and a spider's web of cracks spreads from my waist. 'No sweat', get a foot in the wall and step up. A quick 360° circle with my one dangling leg confirms there is no wall and then a piece of the spider's web falls away. I look down, mesmerized by the deep blackness. Now I sweat. Of all the cruel jokes . . . there's the tent, there's the bloody rope still lying in the snow where we dropped it after emerging from the three-day couloir.

Together yet alone. Spread the load. It's my only hope, but how? I take the punt by twisting my body and heaving up on my trapped heel (a heel hook at 7,000 metres?) twisting further to land on my back, arms and legs spread wide, and I rocket down the slope, so thankful for such a simple thing.

I roll into a self-arrest, find my ski pole and stagger to the tent to collapse vomiting in the snow outside the door. Crampons off, duvet on and into the bag. I've been sleeping fully suited for four days now. I hear a thud outside followed by five minutes of vomiting and Glen's in.

A rough night, a cup of boiled water each and the last of the food (Smarties), then I lead down the couloir that comprises the bottom part of our route. It's bad, worse than the ascent, with fresh slab debris everywhere, but there's no choice. We plunge down, absolutely exhausted but very much on edge. Finally we stop with 200 metres to go. The slope is obviously loaded and we're the trigger. There's no real choice but we decide on going leftwards. I take five steps and the whole slope goes, slowly dissolving into slabs that disappear down in an ominously slow and quiet motion. The fracture line runs clearly a metre behind me. The only piece that didn't go is the piece I'm standing in. We try again, this time rightwards 50 metres to gain a recent slab debris path which we hope will be more stable. My nerves are shot, so Glen goes tip-toeing. It's OK, and soon we're on the Changtse neve, skiing for our Advance Base Camp on the East Rongbuk moraine, successful.

So the summit is reached, the story over, the experience ended. No, it's just part of a larger tale.

●

The Australian Changtse Traverse Expedition arrived in Tibet in late August 1987, post monsoon. The members comprised Louis Whitton, David Hunter, Colin Gordon, John Smart, Glen Nash and Rod Turner. We were ably led by Louis, and it was his dream and energy that saw us in that harsh and once forbidden land.

We got off to a flying start when John compared the Chinese Mountaineering Association to a mad woman's kitchen! We spent that night writing letters of apology to the Chinese nation in the hope of saving our permit. Needless to say, John was asked to concentrate on things other than negotiating. Louis was more successful, even though he looked like a Hobbit in Day-Glo zinc cream.

Three days of hard but interesting driving took us to the world's most sacred valley, the Rongbuk, and the Everest Base Camp.

From Base Camp we placed three camps up the East Rongbuk Glacier, the third one, at 6,000 metres, being our Advance Base Camp which was our home for the next month. It was here that the adrenalin starting flowing. We were well and truly in the mountains and no longer just trudging on another of the world's great moraines.

Besides giving us direct access to the Changtse Glacier and neve, Camp Three served as a welcome teahouse for the American North Ridge team and the British North-east Ridge team (both on Mt Everest). The Americans were well organized and very friendly while the British were a bit chaotic and well sponsored. But as one of them put it, 'The gear's too good to bring here. I keep it at home to impress the birds at Chamonix with.'

The Australians were definitely chaotic, well equipped and well known for scrounging. They also featured the only base-camp tent with wall-to-wall dirt.

After five days acclimatizing, we skied up the Changtse Glacier to examine our route as we had only seen some rather old photos of it. A perusal of the North Ridge and its snow conditions showed our traversing plan to be so ambitious as to be almost Pythonesque in its humour. We were all in hysterics, considering we had just played a $40,000 joke on ourselves. The photos used in our planning had failed to show the ridge's true steepness or, more importantly, its considerable length. Snow conditions obviously varied from year to year, 1987 being a bad one.

This caused the expedition to reassess its goals and desires. Glen and I decided to attempt what we thought was an obvious unclimbed line on the North Face (later finding out that the couloir that formed the bottom of the route was climbed in 1985 by a large Japanese

expedition employing their usual 'urban' tactics). Louis, Colin, David and John decided to attempt the easier, though longer, North-east Ridge.

The lessons of Himalayan climbing were being assimilated. You must be flexible, keep an open mind, and be patient. The dichotomy between what you plan and the environmental conditions when you arrive is great. You spend weeks getting into position only to have the weather or conditions rob you of your 'climbing window'. The whole experience is an inverted pyramid of effort and expectation.

This splitting of goals caused a period of turmoil amongst us, personally and as a group. The mountain had, in effect, held up a mirror to us, and we each had to come to grips with what we saw. The mountains are a harsh mistress, indeed.

One member even went as far as to lobby for a group vote to force Glen and I on to the North-east Ridge. Another member had to adjust to the gap between his desires and abilities. I was forced to question my reasons for climbing and what it means to me. I had come on my first Himalayan climb expecting to climb with the support of five fellow climbers on a long but non-technical route. Instead, I found myself contemplating a two-man Alpine-style attempt on an unclimbed route of a much more serious nature. As such, the climb, for me, became a personal reaffirmation of my love for the mountains and their harsh but beautiful regime. Strong links were forged between Glen and myself. These are the real rewards of Alpine-style climbing, the shared intimacy between partners and the mountain, an experience that is as basic as it is profound.

After waiting a further three days for a fresh snowfall to slough off, we all skied up into the Changtse neve and camped overnight using just our tent flys. Glen and I, estimating a three-day climb, took three days of food and three Gaz cylinders. The next morning saw us skin to the base of our route, a long snow couloir that lay beside an icefall and which appeared to get rather steep and narrow at the top. From there we hoped to climb the flank of the North-east Ridge, emerging at the base of the true summit ridge, the top third of our route.

From the start, conditions were poor. The combination of the northerly aspect of our route and the prevailing winds resulted in deep and very unconsolidated snow conditions. The route was 'loaded'. Glen had only taken the first knee-deep steps when a dull 'whoomph' and cracking shook the entire slope—slab, to be our constant nerve-wracking companion for four days. We moved along 50 metres and I lead out the first, tentative, pitch. And so the day went, with worrying, knee-deep snow. Our packs grew heavier as we got higher.

We climbed in pitches but didn't belay, mainly as a way to pace ourselves, as we soon found following and then leading a full rope to be very gruelling. At 6 pm we reached a drifted-over crevasse, an ideal bivvy site, and so started the three-hour ritual of setting up camp, cooking and brewing drinks. After much debate I had brought my Walkman, and Madonna and Eurythmics were to provide an escape that we came to greatly appreciate. Watching snow melt at altitude is not very entertaining. The North-east Ridge party were visible, camped at the foot of their route, having made slow progress during the day.

The next day dawned fine, although the wind seemed to be rising earlier each morning. We discarded half of our already limited food and retained only one billy. Again we climbed in pitches but didn't belay, but doubled the rope, finding that half a rope-length was all our lungs would allow us to consistently run out. We had hoped for firmer snow as we climbed higher and the couloir narrowed, but these were soon dashed. In fact, we began encountering our first sections of bottomless snow. We were both really feeling the altitude and this, combined with the worsening snow conditions and steepening angle, made for very hard going. Glen was particularly enervated, and suddenly, about 4 pm, he hit a wall, his dry altitude-cough also having worsened.

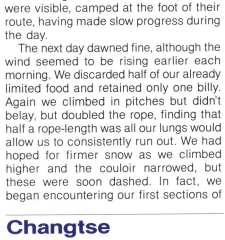
We had no choice but to dig the tent in. Our first effort saw the end of the dome fully a metre over fresh air and wind-driven spindrift settling all over us. We would have to sleep sitting up, propped against our packs.

However, by 6 pm we decided to try and dig further into the slope as the best night's rest possible was essential if we were to have any chance of success. We had only made 250 metres progress that day and were obviously in for a longer climb than anticipated. The effort required to go outside again was daunting, but Alpine-style climbing demands that you must make every effort, however tedious, to further the chances of any breaks going your way. With only a boot-width stamped ledge outside it was not a place to relax. Besides our being exhausted, the digging confirmed our worst fears. The entire snow mass was unconsolidated. We decided that, from there on, either of us would speak up when we thought the snow conditions had become downright lethal.

That night Glen took a sleeping tablet for the first time (I had been using them since 6,000 metres).

On our third day of climbing we still were not out of the couloir, which was only the bottom section of our route. Due to it narrowing, we were finally forced into the middle of the couloir, a position we had been avoiding because of increased avalanche risk. As the going steepened we were each forced to use two tools, and our legs screamed with the extra effort.

Changtse



Glen was climbing on sheer willpower, although the expanding horizon gave us some encouragement. Finally we were in the top narrows, but again we were reminded that Changtse was not going to give us a break. We faced steep loose snow over broken rock that twisted our front points below the snow's surface.

Finally we were out, the first flat bivvy spot in days beckoning just 25 metres to our right. Glen led off and collapsed, I tried and collapsed. Finally, Glen tried again and made it. All for just 25 metres of deep flat snow. Things were grim. Above us reared the flank of the North-east Ridge and then the true summit ridge. At least we could now see our goal.

While putting up the tent I noticed two distant dots moving up the North-east Ridge. This was the last we were to see of the North-east Ridge party. Colin had turned back after moving slowly at altitude and suffering from cold feet. Louis was to spend a day at 7,100 metres before descending, finally paying the penalty for all his efforts earlier in the expedition. David and John were to spend several more days in their tent above 7,000 metres but without coming to grips with the worsening weather conditions. That night the wind and spindrift really picked up.

We awoke, bitterly cold, to find the fly pressed right in over our heads due to very heavy drifting. (The North-east Ridge party were almost completely buried inside their tent.) Everything was covered in spindrift. Without waterproof and breathable shells on our sleeping bags we would have had to turn back. Normal bags would have been rendered useless under our bivvy conditions. In fact, I had a thick layer of ice on my sleeping mat where snow had melted and refrozen during the night, but my bag was still dry and lofted. Outside, the wind and spindrift howled.

We were feeling very battered, and it was tempting to take a rest day, especially as we were only half way up our route at best. A quick discussion ensued. We had fuel for only two more brews, food was down to Smarties, and it could be argued that a rest day at this altitude and in our current state would only cause us to run down further. But could we go to the top and back in a day? Although easier angled it was further than we had climbed in three days.

We decided it was that day or nothing. We stepped out into the bitter winds and cold. Perhaps the snow would finally be firmer up high? Weight was crucial, so we left the rope and hardware at the tent. We simply took a ski pole and axe each. Immediately above the tent we had to skirt a large avalanche bowl to gain the North-east Ridge. Half-way through it I planted a stock and watched in disbelief as 500 metres of slope above slowly dissolved into pieces and slid down on us. With Glen yelling 'traverse', we ploughed our way left, just clearing the sliding blocks. With considerable trepidation we ploughed upwards, Glen doing the trail breaking (as he was to do to the summit). It was all I could do to follow, already taking ten breaths a step with 300 metres still to go.

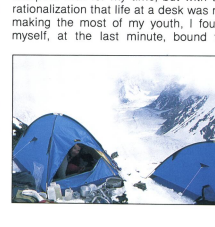
If anything, conditions were worse than they had been in the couloir, a thick wind-crust now overlay the deep snow. We decided not to follow the actual summit ridge but to keep down on the edge of the North Face to lessen our exposure to the wind, although we did pop up for quick view of Mt Everest and Nepal.

I cursed as I watched Glen moving strongly up the final slopes. I had been reduced to 20 breaths a step and didn't know how long I could keep it up. Then we finally got a break. From below, a seemingly steep false summit, which I had been eyeing nervously all the way up, barred the way to the real summit. It was a great pleasure to watch Glen work his way smoothly over it. The way was clear, we were actually going to do it. ■

K2

● I THOUGHT OF CLIMBING K2 WHILST descending from the top of Gasherbrum IV. Its sharp pyramid had risen high above all else in a sea of peaks more spectacular than I had ever seen. From those rarified heights its summit had seemed elegant and desirable. Yes, it would be good to stand atop that peak too, I had felt, but then, some days later, I looked up the oft-trod path to the base of K2, to where eight expeditions were camped, and thought perhaps not. I came to these mountains for the excitement of treading new ground, for the joys of exploration, to be with my friends, a tiny island of humanity in a wilderness of mountains that seemed half way between heaven and earth. It wouldn't be the same on a mountain crawling with people, would it?

A few desk-bound months changed my mind about all that. I have an ability to thrive in what most people call adverse outdoor environments, but put me in an office with air-conditioning, fluorescent lights and irritatingly frequent telephone calls, and I begin to die, like some hardy outdoor plant brought inside. The free, pure air of a base camp below a big peak then becomes very sought after, no matter how crowded it may be. The 1987 International K2 Expedition had plenty to compete with for my time, but with the rationalization that life at a desk was not making the most of my youth, I found myself, at the last minute, bound for

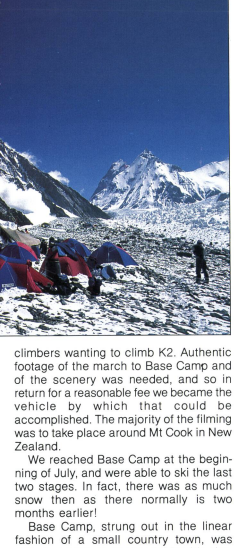


The South Face of K2 (the Abruzzi Ridge is on the right skyline) towers over 'K2 Boulevard'. The pyramid peak to the right was attempted by the author's party. ***Below****, camp at 6,200 metres on the 'pyramid peak' pictured above. The foot of the Abruzzi Spur is in the middle distance and K2 Base Camp just below the glacier junction.* ***Top right****, Greg Child on the 'pyramid peak'.* ***Bottom right****, the International K2 Expedition at Concordia: the author second from the left, Greg Child second from the right.* Tim Macartney-Snape

Pakistan again to join a well-organized and refreshingly well-sponsored expedition.

It had come into being when Australian climber Cherie Bremer-Kamp had passed on a permit she had held with her late husband Chris Chandler to American Jim Wickwire. Our initial objective was to do an alpine-style ascent of the unclimbed East Face, a face Jim had become familiar with when he had climbed K2 by the North-east Ridge with the 1978 American expedition. Ironically, after putting in much of the fund-raising work, Jim, a dedicated lawyer, had to pull out at the last minute. Even without him, however, the team was well qualified for such an ambitious goal. Two others in the team had been on K2 before. Steve Swenson, an engineer from Seattle, had almost succeeded on the North Ridge in 1986, and this was to be Doug Scott's fourth attempt! Doug's partner this time was his 24-year-old son, Mike. They had a relationship which was enviable for the care and respect which they had for each other—the perfect ingredients for a successful climbing partnership, just as in life. There were also two others from Seattle, Greg Child and Phil Erschler. Phil is a guide on Mt Rainier who has the staggering tally of over 300 ascents to his credit, and was also the next person to stand on the summit of Mt Everest after Greg Mortimer and I in 1984. Base Camp manager and chief cook Carolyn Gunn completed our team.

Our major funding came from a film company making a feature film, the plot of which revolves round two fictitious



climbers wanting to climb K2. Authentic footage of the march to Base Camp and of the scenery was needed, and so in return for a reasonable fee we became the vehicle by which that could be accomplished. The majority of the filming was to take place around Mt Cook in New Zealand.

We reached Base Camp at the beginning of July, and were able to ski the last two stages. In fact, there was as much snow then as there normally is two months earlier!

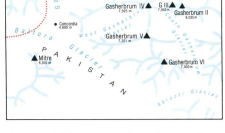
Base Camp, strung out in the linear fashion of a small country town, was already a settlement of considerable size. First was the Swiss–Polish team of four members, then came the French with around ten members, and then the Japanese, slightly more numerous. We took our place beyond them on the rocky crest of the medial moraine which emanated from the foot of the Abruzzi Spur two kilometres further up the glacier. Shortly afterwards, two more expeditions arrived (Basque and Japanese–Pakistani) and slotted themselves in above us along 'K2 Boulevard'.

We sat in Base Camp, prisoners of our ambition and the weather. The frustrating thing was that below 7,000 metres the weather was never really bad. The lashing blizzards of the previous year never came. Instead, we had an interminable succession of blandly bad days occasionally broken by one and, rarely, two fine days which kept our hopes alive—something like commercial television.

Visitors of all manner trickled in and out almost every day. Trekkers, photographers, porters, mail-runners, and Pakistani Army helicopters and their crews came and went. Barely two hours down the glacier was Broad Peak Base Camp where there were Norwegians, Mexicans, British and more French.

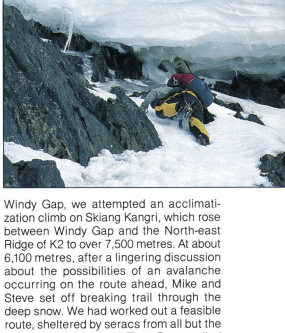
Our strategy was to acclimatize on the fine peaks at the head of the glacier. From their flanks we hoped to get a 'feel' for the East Face of K2, opposite them. My first view of the face was intimidating, to say the least. Typically, wind-torn clouds hung low over the face. Massive avalanche cones swept down from the ragged mist. The cones spilt far on to the glacier and appeared to have acted as launching ramps for millions of ice blocks that lay scattered almost to the other side of its flat surface. We made an advance base at the furthest possible point opposite. From there we first made an attempt on the elegant 7,000 metre peak immediately above us. Mike became a casualty early on when he split his right index finger.

K2



Doug took him back to Base Camp where Carolyn expertly stitched him up. The rest of us continued up mixed ground, which Steve said reminded him of the Eigerwand, and Phil just walked up with impeccable French technique saying that this was what he did for a living. We stopped to make camp in a swirling snow-storm. Tantalizing breaks in the weather gave us a fantastic perspective of the upper reaches of the East Face. Once, as I examined the vast sloping snow plateau below the summit pyramid through my binoculars, I came to the horrified conclusion that the 500 metre line I was looking at was not a shallow ice cliff but the crown of a giant slab avalanche which must have been ten metres deep at the fracture! The avalanche would have swept straight down our proposed route and across the glacier. Realizations like that when you are above 6,000 metres and still acclimatizing make you suddenly very short of breath. I was no longer very interested in the East Face. Perhaps the South Face, up the right spur, more commonly known as Doug's Route, would be better. The next day we turned back, frightened by very discomforting snow conditions.

Later, after a couple of ski trips up to



Windy Gap, we attempted an acclimatization climb on Skiang Kangri, which rose between Windy Gap and the North-east Ridge of K2 to over 7,500 metres. At about 6,100 metres, after a lingering discussion about the possibilities of an avalanche occurring on the route ahead, Mike and Steve set off breaking trail through the deep snow. We had worked out a feasible route, sheltered by seracs from all but the smallest snow slough. Then Doug called out, 'Don't do it, son, it's not worth the risk'. So we camped and descended the next day, convinced that trying the East Face of K2 in 1987 would be pushing our luck too far.

As we had exhausted acclimatization possibilities on the east side of K2, we turned our attention to Broad Peak (8,047 metres). There was no intention of climbing the whole mountain, of course—all we wanted was as much altitude as possible on a straightforward route. However, after steady progress past other climbers, remnants of abandoned fixed ropes and filthy campsites, for the third time on the trip we descended due to avalanche danger, from just below 7,000 metres. Predictably the weather closed in again. By this stage we had been at Base Camp a month and I felt my commitment to life in that other world beyond the expedition was weakening my resolve. I went home. Doug and Mike followed very shortly. The others made two attempts on K2, but each time bad weather turned

them back at about 7,000 metres. Such was the weather that very few parties were successful on any of the upper Baltoro peaks during July and August 1987. ■

Tim Macartney-Snape (see *Contributors* in *Wild* no 12) is *Wild*'s Contributing Editor for mountaineering and Australia's most successful Himalayan climber. With Greg Mortimer he became the first (and, to date, only) Australian to climb Mt Everest when they reached its summit, by a new route, in 1984.

HUT LOG

BOOKS

Extraordinary tales from holed-up walkers and skiers; by *Gary Tischer*

● MANY A SNOW-BOUND SKIER OR BUSHWALKER has whiled away the hours around a hut fire by reading the hut's log-book. Tall tales of mammoth rodents, amazing artwork, and bush poetry are only some of the things found in log-books.

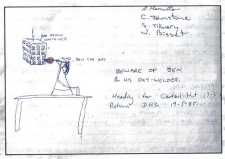
Originally used only for factual notes which included date, names of party, route, and the weather, hut log-books have evolved into running records of huts and the personalities who have passed through them. Comments range from deep insights into life to limericks about fellow bushwalkers. They remain as typically Australian as the bush that surrounds the huts, interspersed occasionally with colourful comments from overseas visitors.

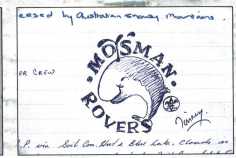
Apart from the usual dates, names, and routes, one theme that appears to run through all log-books is the preoccupation with the huts' small furry inhabitants. A drawing of a family crest, with a rat as its centrepiece, and the words 'In rats we trust', shows that some have elevated these furry creatures to higher places than the ceilings in which they often live. Others have great fear of the furry fiends, even having to leave the confines of the hut to sleep outside because of the racket attributed to the 'rat quartet'!

Some people write handy hints on how to hang your pack up or how not to leave water-filled billies when you leave the huts (rats can swim, but not for long). An entry in the Cascade Hut log-book warns, 'Beware of Ben and his oxy-welder', beside a drawing of Ben the rat at the top of a small ladder burning his way through the metal 'rat-proof' container. One learned fellow writes that the occupants are not rats, but merely marsupial mice, and assures all that there is nothing to fear. As there have been no recorded deaths due to rat attacks (in Australia, at least), prospective bushwalkers and skiers should not be put off visiting huts because of the possibility of a chance meeting with 'Reggie Rat and associates'.

The weather is also usually commented on by parties in the mountains. Anne and Angus in 1974 provided the Round Mountain Hut with a weather forecaster (copied from a chart in Upper Pyle Hut, Skippers Ranges, New Zealand). A piece of string was tied to the middle of the page, and on the left side were written descriptive possibilities for the string and on the right

***Left**, Seamans Hut. **Below**, the author 'researching this article' in Mawsons Hut. (Both huts are in Kosciusko National Park.)* These and all uncaptioned photos Gary Tischer

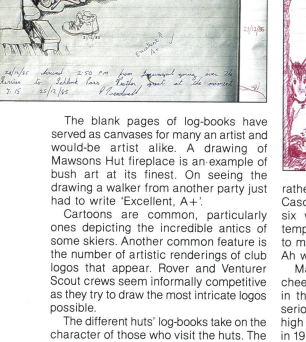




side the relative weather phenomenon:

string still	calm
string moving	windy
string wet	raining
string dry	fine
string invisible	foggy
string stiff	freezing
string throws a shadow	sunny
string gone	green yeti has struck again

Who could doubt the accuracy of such a system?



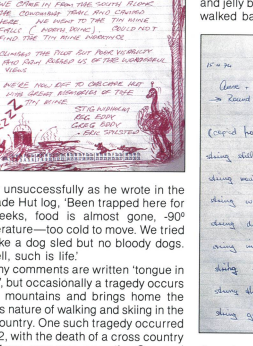
The blank pages of log-books have served as canvases for many an artist and would-be artist alike. A drawing of Mawsons Hut fireplace is an example of bush art at its finest. On seeing the drawing a walker from another party just had to write 'Excellent, A+'.

Cartoons are common, particularly ones depicting the incredible antics of some skiers. Another common feature is the number of artistic renderings of club logos that appear. Rover and Venturer Scout crews seem informally competitive as they try to draw the most intricate logos possible.

The different huts' log-books take on the character of those who visit the huts. The Albina Lodge (removed in 1983) log entries are especially creative in artwork and comments, while the Tin Mines Huts log-book is filled with controversy and conflict. The conflict arises out of the exchange between bushwalkers, and four-wheel-drivers and trail-bike riders who travel (illegally) from Cowombat Flat, on the Victorian border. The Schlink Hilton has also recently seen some mudslinging between a particular Sydney bushwalker and Snowy Mountains Authority workers. Opinions are free, and many have added theirs.

Another interesting character wrote in the Mawsons Hut log, 'Arrived from Valentines about 10.30 am—took one hour—will have food and coffee and head off to Tin Hut. Weather is cold and *very* windy but clearing. Left shoulder hurts from broken collar-bone.' A following party summed it up with the comment, 'Nothing slows this boy down!' The Tin Hut log of the same date reads, 'Arrived 5.30 pm after getting lost in scrub from Mawsons and Valentines this morning. Heading to Schlink today.' Alas, our hero seems to have taken seven hours to travel five kilometres up a grassy valley! Tall tales abound.

Occasionally huts are visited, or at least their log-books signed, by celebrities and heads of state. One such 'visitor', in 1973, was apparently Chairman Mao, who commented on Valentines Hut with the quote: 'Staying at the little red hut is more useful than reading the little red book.' Norm (of 'Life. Be in it' fame) also seems to have ventured into the bush, though



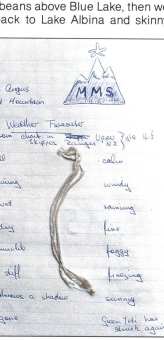
rather unsuccessfully as he wrote in the Cascade Hut log, 'Been trapped here for six weeks, food is almost gone, -90° temperature—too cold to move. We tried to make a dog sled but no bloody dogs. Ah well, such is life.'

Many comments are written 'tongue in cheek', but occasionally a tragedy occurs in the mountains and brings home the serious nature of walking and skiing in the high country. One such tragedy occurred in 1972, with the death of a cross country skier from exposure near the Cup and Saucer. The associated log-book entries, one of which read, 'Hopeless conditions. Eating terribly; also very cold at night', helped piece together the circumstances leading up to the tragedy. This shows the value of writing trip details in case of any mishap, as search and rescue teams would be more likely to find lost or injured walkers or skiers with the help of log-book information.

Similar tragedies have occurred in the mountains, one of the earliest being in 1928 with the deaths of Seaman and Hayes, after climbing Mt Kosciusko in winter. Seamans Hut now stands as a memorial and as a safety shelter to help prevent further tragedy. More than a few parties have sought shelter at Seamans Hut during blizzards in both summer and winter. One such party wrote, 'This is the account of our six-and-a-half-hour trip that should've taken two hours, but we were really desperate and slightly lost, and just happened to go the right way . . . in blinding weather. At first we were joking about dying, but as we went further the joke seemed less of a joke. I hugged the first person I saw.'

It is heartening to see that some bushwalking parents are taking their children on overnight walks in the high country. The children's comments are often refreshing in their innocent outlooks. Ingrid Forshaw, on her first bushwalk, wrote, 'Just came for a quick look. A long walk down but a very nice hut. It seems to me a proper bush hut . . . I am only eight. This is my first bushwalk. I am thoroughly enjoying it.'

Are some of these children perhaps products of honeymoon trips into the romantic seclusion of the mountains? A log-book records, 'N and G spent a night of their honeymoon here. Good hut, good weather, good company and a great lake.' Another couple, not exactly on their honeymoon, wrote, 'We ate black bread and jelly beans above Blue Lake, then we walked back to Lake Albina and skinny



dipped, and we were very satisfied . . . it is a gorgeous day today!' In the space, a following party wrote '(Something happened!)'. It must be the mountain air.

On those cold, often lonely nights around the fire, the imagination is also ignited. Some write down their thoughts as poems and limericks. The poetry is written in many different styles. Stephen Corey wrote on the virtues (or lack of them) of fireside furniture:

'As I was sitting in my chair
I knew the bottom wasn't there,
Nor the legs, nor the back, but I just sat,
Ignoring little things like that.'

Although similar in some respects, each log-book and the hut in which it is kept takes on a unique character, so next time you are visiting an alpine hut, write of your visit in the log, and good reading! ■

Gary Tischer (see *Contributors* in *Wild* no II) is an active bushwalker who has walked extensively in Queensland and New South Wales.

Death of a River

Andrea McQuitty recalls time spent on what was one of Tasmania's best canoeing rivers

...and the stories they told
of a river that flowed
made me sad
to think it was gone...
America, *Horse With No Name*

● 1982: THE THREE OF US LEFT THE CAR and wandered across to the Lovers Leap Look-out to view the Murchison River below. The late afternoon sun shone up the valley, touching the tops of ancient myrtles and lighting the swirling waters below. So many times we had been down there on the water, just playing in the sunshine or struggling to survive in floods. Our idle chatter fell to silence as we looked down on to the river, suddenly realizing that this was the last time we would see it flowing.

My initiation to 'real' canoeing had come on this river one cold grey winter's day. The surrounding hills were draped in cloud, and strands of mist still hung low, wrapped round trees in the steep river gorge. The water was deep, fast and utterly black. Boils, appearing from nowhere, would erupt across the smooth water, eager to catch the unwary paddler. The river slid between big boulders with often only the roar of white water to indicate what lay beyond.

Suddenly, round a corner, the river disappeared, squeezed between boulders to a third its normal width. Our intrepid leader headed for the 'bank' to check out the rapid, most of the others following him. From his vantage point on the boulder by the rapid, and with a big grin on his face, he waved through one of the best paddlers. From my kayak, I watched the white helmet disappear over the drop and a few seconds later the bow of a kayak was shot skyward to the cheers of the spectators.

A few minutes later our leader appeared again and, with same maniacal grin, waved me down the rapid.

'Who, me? But . . . !'

A wave of the fear that you don't experience in ordinary everyday life passed through me. The spectators on the bank shouted a hundred different instructions, but when I reached the brink

'The last paddlers on the Pieman River.' All photos Andrea McQuitty

the point of commitment, I knew they were futile. I was out of control. It took just a second for me to see why this rapid was called Helicopter Rock. The water fell straight on to a large boulder on top of which the water spun round in a confused boil. From here you could be shot off in any direction, with only two things certain. One was that you would end up in a stopper. I did. The second certainly was that, in a stopper like that, any inexperienced paddler would swim. I swam. The others portaged. As the leader dragged me from the water he confided that the good paddler who had gone first had also swum. I swore never to trust a man with a smile like that again.

But the thrill of overcoming fear to paddle a rapid, successfully or unsuccessfully, was just one of the things which drew us back again and again to these rivers on Tasmania's west coast; to the Murchison River with its whirlpools, to gaze endlessly at the Wee Georgie Wood Rapid on the Mackintosh River, planning to paddle it one day, and to the majestic Pieman River. With experience came the skill and confidence to fully appreciate the best of the canoeing which these rivers offered.

The Pieman River, formed by the confluence of the Mackintosh and Murchison Rivers at Tullah, was the king of the west coast rivers. Its tributaries rose on the western edge of the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park, flowing steeply through boulder-choked gorges. The Pieman River had a character all of its own. The black water flowed deep and powerful, cascading amber through sunlit gorges, at times slinking, mirror-calm, through ancient rainforest, white foam twisting and curling in eddies. Eventually it flowed through the notoriously rough Pieman Heads to the Indian Ocean.

The history of the river is just as colourful. Originally named the Retreat River, the Pieman gained its current name when an escaped convict, a pieman by

trade, was recaptured after crossing the river. Thomas Kent, an incorrigible little crook, escaped with a companion from Settlement Island in Maquarie Harbour and made his way north, crossing the river on an improvised raft. Upon his recapture he was returned to Settlement Island, only to escape again. This time he headed south and was recaptured in Port Davey.

There followed years of Huon pine logging along the river. The Pieman and its tributaries marked the northernmost extent of Huon pine growth in Tasmania. The piners floated cut logs down the river, and many logs still lie adrift on the beaches at its mouth.

A period of gold mining created the township of Corinna on the banks of the lower Pieman. The success of the diggings is debatable. It appears that while some struck fortune, others considered it a 'stringer'. They found a little gold in all the creeks, but not enough to make it payable. The term 'stringer' has now found a place in the modern-day history of the river with the naming of the fourth and final dam on this river system. With the Murchison, Mackintosh and Bastyan Dams already finished, the filling of the Stringers Creek (now Eric Reece) Dam, in May 1986, completed the Hydro-Electric Commission's Pieman River development.

This last dam flooded the lower Pieman Gorge, which was a unique stretch of canoeing water. In this island of rocky rivers, the big, clean rapids of the Pieman made it always a pleasure to paddle. The start of the gorge was marked by the Breakfast Rapid, a long, steep chute, ending in a mass of haystack waves. Soon after, Heemskirk Falls fell into a Huon pine-ringed pool just up from the river.

The gorge was full of waves for surfing, but none as good as the Hydro Wave. At the end of the gorge, a HEC quarry had pushed rubble out into the river, producing an amazing wave on which up to three people could surf at once, from one side of the river to the other.

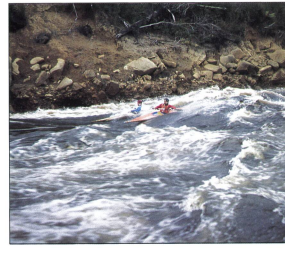
Several years ago severe bushfires burnt the forest along this part of the river, leaving the landscape in a monotone of grey and black. But, just before the flooding, signs of regeneration were obvious—a final fling before the end.

●

1986: the last time we paddled the Pieman River we finished in the dark. The roar of the last rapid had faded into the distance behind us as we came to the dam site. There was the dam wall—a huge shadow growing from the cliffs and rising from the black waters before us. A row of sentry spotlights partly cross-lit the wall and blazed across the water in sharp defiance of our presence. High up on the left, like a scene from *Mad Max*, a rubbish bonfire cast flickering shadows against the stark cliffs. I fully expected to see armed soldiers jackbooting across the dam wall and to have one of those spotlights swung into my face.

'Stop, or we shoot! And none of that Eskimo rolling to dodge the bullets.'

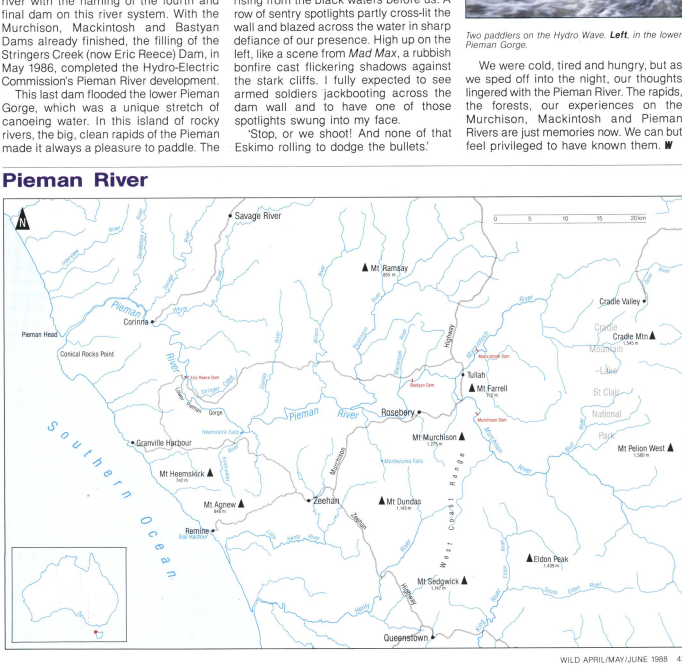
But instead, the silence was broken only by the whirring of a pump, and the murmur of tired paddlers landing, still buzzing from the trip. The sole guardian of this awesome domain was a charming HEC worker—going out of his way to help us—who talked of Pink Floyd and helicopters.



Two paddlers on the Hydro Wave. ***Left****, in the lower Pieman Gorge.*

We were cold, tired and hungry, but as we sped off into the night, our thoughts lingered with the Pieman River. The rapids, the forests, our experiences on the Murchison, Mackintosh and Pieman Rivers are just memories now. We can but feel privileged to have known them. **W**

Pieman River



BLUE MOUNTAINS CANYONS GUIDE

Details of classic canyons, from the Wolgan valley to the Kanangra Walls; by *David Noble*

● MANY CREEKS IN THE NORTHERN AND central Blue Mountains occasionally flow through deep chasms carved into the sandstone plateaux they drain. Called canyons, where they are much deeper than they are wide, these slots, often of stunning beauty, have attracted adventurous bushwalkers for several decades. Descending a canyon is exciting and committing, and should be regarded as a *serious and potentially dangerous undertaking.*

This guide will enable *competent and experienced canyoners* to visit the spectacular and exciting places described. To preserve their challenge, the canyons, especially the more remote ones, are described only broadly.

Canyons should only be descended by parties of strong swimmers with abseiling and rock-scrambling experience. It is often necessary to swim fully clothed, with a pack, in extremely cold water. It should be noted that there have been a number of deaths in Blue Mountain canyons (including those described in this guide) in recent years. The potential dangers should not be underestimated.

This guide presumes that users have a high level of fitness and ability, will have received training from skilled and experienced instructors, properly use appropriate equipment and have care for personal safety. A canyon is not a place to learn to abseil.

The publisher accepts no responsibility for inaccurate or incomplete information.

The directions left and right are given facing downstream.

Difficulty. An indication of relative difficulty of a descent is given. The degree of difficulty depends greatly on the water level and weather.

Maps. Grid references given correspond to

the grid on 1:100,000 Natmap sheets (*Burragorang*, *Katoomba*, and *Wallerawang*), and 1:25,000 Central Mapping Authority of New South Wales sheets (*Lenolan*, *Kanangra*, *Katoomba*, *Mt Morgan*, *Mt Wilson*, *Rock Hill*, *Wollangambe* and *Yerranderie*).

Safety. Canyons are potentially very dangerous places. Hazards include abseiling problems, rockfall, slippery ledges and flash floods.

• Be careful with belay points, always replace old slings with new slings. One canyoner, lucky to be alive, tells the story about how he came upon a belay point in Raynon Brook that had about a dozen old-looking slings round it. He thought that at least one would hold, so threaded his abseiling rope through all of them. As he was descending the rope came down with him! Always test trees and logs if they are being used as an anchor.

• Keep long hair and loose clothing well away from descenders, brake bars and karabiners. A snag could prove fatal.

• Use a method of abseiling that you are familiar with. A screw-gate karabiner with a brake bar such as a pirate is ideal as there is always a chance of dropping figure-of-eight descenders or crossed krabs.

• It is essential for at least one party member to carry prusik slings and know how to use them. It is advisable for all members to carry a set in their pocket; a small knife is also useful.

• Make sure that the ropes are rigged up so that they will not catch when you attempt to pull them down. If two ropes are tied together, make sure the knot is well away from any lip where it may snag.

• An experienced person should set up the ropes and be the first down any abseil. Be very careful that there are no tangles or knots in the rope when descending over an overhang. The last person down a drop should also be experienced and make sure that there are no twists in the two strands. Before the last person descends, the rope should be tested to see if it starts to pull down easily.

• Helmets should be worn, especially in many of the Kanangra canyons where rockfall is common. Mind your head when abseiling off chockstones.

• A double fisherman's knot or a double figure-of-eight knot should be used to tie two ropes together. Never try and abseil past a knot unless you have the appropriate equipment and have practiced the correct procedure.

• Flash floods can be particularly dangerous and have contributed to the deaths of several canyoners. Canyoning is quite safe in light rain —indeed the canyons are often quite beautiful. Sudden heavy thunderstorms are the danger. If the water level starts to rise it is probably best to sit out the storm on a high ledge if one is available. Flash floods are less of a problem in the Kanangra canyons, where escape ledges are numerous. However the rock can become very slippery when wet by rain. Waterfalls also seem to attract lightning bolts during thunderstorms.

• If you are a novice it is advisable to only go down canyons with experienced people who can 'show you the ropes'. Many of the bushwalking clubs based from Canberra, through Sydney, to Newcastle have a wealth of canyoning knowledge they can pass on to new members.

• *Keeping warm should be a primary consideration whilst canyoning,* particularly if there is any possibility of extended waiting at belays. Some canyoners use wet-suits, but these are not essential. A woollen singlet worn under a windproof spray jacket, together with bathing togs (not long trousers if there is any swimming involved) and sandshoes is common canyoning garb. The sandstone canyons, in particular, should be visited only in the warmer, summer, months.

Canyon preservation. Over the years, many have become concerned about damage to canyon environments. People who explore new canyons are becoming reluctant to share their discoveries for fear that pristine canyons will become desecrated. Sandstone canyons, in particular, are amazing places, with their walls sculptured by swirling water over millenniums into incredible formations. The eerie light and the constant sound of moving water leave an indelible impression on those who visit these places.

Damage to canyons over the years includes:

• Exit signs being painted illegally part-way through Wollangambe Canyon. Many people have probably missed out on some of the best parts of this creek because, encouraged by the signs, they left the canyon early.

• A bolt being placed at the top of the first abseil in Claustral Canyon close to perfectly satisfactory log and thread belays.

• An exit sign being bolted to the wall in Thunder Gorge near Rainbow Ravine. Recently, some paint marks have appeared close to where the sign used to be.

• Foot-holds and hand-holds have been gouged out of the rock near a small waterfall in Rainbow Ravine. This was totally unnecessary if parties were prepared to climb carefully up this section.

• Tracks being marked and bashed out to the start of certain canyons.

The list could go on and on. People who visit canyons should be prepared to raise their own standards to suit the canyon. They should not expect to be led to the canyon on a marked track, have ladders and hand-rails down waterfalls, and signs marking the way out. Canyons in good weather can be benign, but in a flash flood, which can come with very little warning, they can become places that will terrify the incompetent. It is essential that canyoning parties contain at least some experienced and *competent* people who can navigate with a map and find their own way out if necessary.

It is suggested that people who visit canyons should follow the following points:

• Do not mark canyon walls with bolts or pitons unless no other belay point can be considered.

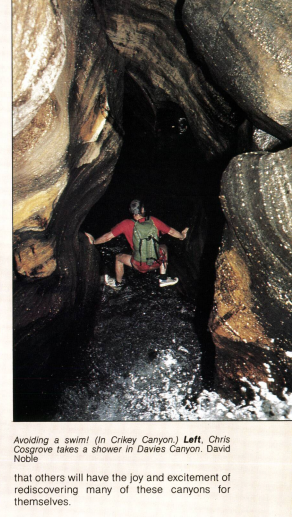
• Use natural fibres such as manila rope for belay slings in canyons which are seldom visited, so that they will rot away. Nylon slings are more sensible in commonly visited canyons.

• Do not leave rope 'hand-rails' down short waterfalls. It is safer for other parties to use their own ropes.

• In canyons such as Claustral Canyon, which are very popular in the middle of summer, make sure that all members of the party have their own abseiling gear and can get on and off the ropes quickly. The waterfalls should be rigged up quickly to minimize delays in parties following yours.

• Over the years, belay points in canyons change. For example, the stump that forms the belay point for the second abseil in Claustral Canyon will probably fall out in the next few years. When this happens a bolt belay will not be needed as it should be possible to combine the first and second drops in one single abseil. This has been done in other canyons when logs have vanished during a flood.

• As canyons are a limited resource, please leave at least some canyons without published descriptions. No canyons north of the Wolgan River or canyons deep in the Wollangambe Wilderness north of Dumbano Creek have been described in this guide. It is the wish of many that others will have the joy and excitement of rediscovering many of these canyons for themselves.



Avoiding a swim! (In Crikey Canyon.) ***Left****, Chris Cosgrove takes a shower in Davies Canyon.* David Noble

SOUTH GROSE

The exploration of the canyons in this area, by bushwalkers, began in earnest in the 1940s. Many attempts were made to penetrate Arethusa Canyon from its bottom end by members of the Sydney Bushwalking Club. The first through-trip was made by a party from the YMCA Ramblers in 1946. The Grand Canyon, with its tourist track, was well known long before this—indeed it was used as a location for the film *For the Term of His Natural Life*.

Access to these canyons is easy from roads leading from the Great Western Highway towards the Grose valley. All are a fairly short distance from railway stations.

Hat Hill Creek 1 short day, 1 or 2 ropes, easy
A fairly poor canyon, but a nice creek except for polluted water. Do not visit the creek after heavy rain, when the sewage treatment works upstream overflows. Can be entered at many places high up and followed to the Grose (with some abseils through the clifflines) or exit on the ridge at grid reference 514798.

Grand Canyon 1 very short day, 1 rope, easy
Quite a good canyon, very pretty and has the attraction of a precariously poised tourist track along the rim of the slot which provides a spectacular exit path. However, the presence of this track makes it advisable for one to *wear a helmet* as tourists often drop rocks down into this slot to see how deep it is. An ideal time to visit the canyon is during light rain, when tourists are scarce. Enter with a 15 m abseil from the tourist track at 513723. The canyon has one swim of about 20 m. Exit via the tourist track.

Arethusa Canyon 1 long day, 1 rope, medium
Not as pretty as Grand Canyon but a longer, harder and more spectacular trip. Like Hat Hill Creek, the water is also badly polluted—watch out for cuts going septic! It is common to enter the creek from the Medlow Bath Airfield Road near the power-lines at 526711. Some rope-work may be needed to reach the creek. An alternative way into the creek is from the Mt Hay Road. Several swims must be negotiated

First Descent

Nipper Leaf

● THE RIDGE WAS HOT, DRY AND FAIRLY SCRUBBY Navigation was difficult as the regrowth from bushfires obscured any extensive views. The cicadas were out in force, their usually pleasant chirping was multiplied into an intense scream. We were glad to descend the sandstone slopes of the creek.

When we met the creek we drank deep gulps of pure cool water, then pushed on down towards the dark tunnel we had discovered a month before. Without sufficient rope, we had vowed to return better prepared. Just as we began to feel the effect of the shade of the creek we reached the last boulder-jam. A seemingly unbroken wall of rock stared at us from the far side of a pool. This was it! Was this canyon as good as we had told everyone it looked?

Bob, the first down, climbed into the pool and waded to the other side, where a small hole allowed the flowing water to disappear downwards. He shouted, 'Bring some logs—we need more belays'.

The first abseil was a simple drop into a pool. We landed in chest-deep water—cold water (boy, that ridge was good). The second took us into the canyon proper. A wet drop into the narrow darkness.

Smooth walls above were covered in moss. Shafts of sunlight caught an occasional fern or dripping spider's web. These rays were our only indication of day. Huge blocks of dark rock had fallen across the slot. We were in a tunnel two metres wide and twenty metres deep.

It is difficult to describe the beauty of such a place. Many may think it dangerous and not see its worth, others cannot find anything of material value and say it is useless. I say it is art, far exceeding anything humans can mould. Its value lies in the spirit of adventure it inspires in people, the overwhelming feelings of appreciation, and the thrill of discovery. The patterns of colour, deep greens and dark blues, contrast with the grey-green of the Blue Mountains ridges. The beating of the cicadas is matched down here by the pounding of the water.

Drop after drop followed the first—the water twisted and turned beneath the continuous roof. Difficult starts to the abseils made progress slow. We tried not to use slings so others could share our sense of discovery. One abseil was belayed from a floating log—a bad start meant the belay followed the canyoneer to the rocks below, with a crunch.

At the bottom of the fifth fall a dark pool led round a narrow corridor into darkness—a difficult swim of unknown length. I was first down. Being a 'piker' I began to bridge the walls, avoiding the swim. To my surprise I found a narrow ledge a small distance underwater. I walked on. Round the corner the thundering of the falls gave way to a tinkle of gentle flowing water. Diffuse light ahead showed the way. The walls widened slowly, then round a bend . . . I was in a cathedral. Full daylight exploded as the tunnel suddenly ended. I could see the chockstones far above, blocking the sky; in front was a great gash of light. At the floor was a glittering altar, a pool fed by a bubbling slide. Beyond, the walls opened out. The dark mossy green was replaced by sharp-edged rocks and coachwood trees.

As the others appeared they too were struck dumb at the sight before them. We had expected a canyon; we were amazed and thrilled at the quality of this short creek. We hoped that this one would never go the way of Claustral. Its narrow walls, dark high roof and unexpected ending would not be the same with bolts and slings.

We have to keep some canyons in pristine condition, without the efforts of those who desecrate such places of beauty. Some places must remain where people can feel that they are the first. ***W***

before the canyon proper is reached. This begins with a 15 m abseil at 537724. Then there are several water-jumps and swims to reach a 20 m waterfall through the cliffline. Early visitors to the creek used to climb up from below via some tree roots which no longer exist. Exits: 1 Tricky traverse and climb up out of Alphius Canyon on the right of the waterfall and back to the Mt Hay Road. 2 One or two short abseils down left of waterfall; follow creek downstream to track, or sidle left to base of cliffs and eventually join the track near the Grand Canyon. A convenient pass at 518723 leads back to the airfield.

Fortress Creek 1 short day, 1 rope, easy

A lower quality canyon but worth doing. From Mt Hay Road, enter from the south side near 546748 with a short abseil. Water-jumps and a 10 m abseil into a pool; long swims to reach waterfall at the main Grose cliffline. Easy passes on the south side back to the Fortress and the Mt Hay Road.

Mt Hay Canyon short to long day depending on exit route, 1 x 50 m rope or 2 shorter ropes (preferable), medium/hard

Also known as Butterbox Canyon and Rocky Points Ravine. Short but very spectacular. Can be entered high up from the Mt Hay Road or directly from a steep tributary at 584755. Several short abseils/water-jumps to reach the main drop. Here the bottom cannot be seen, the lowest point visible being a large chockstone. This chockstone has been reached by downclimbing but this is difficult. Abseil from a thread or log belay to the chockstone, and then a 20 m abseil from bolts. Alternatively, one can do one long abseil down the whole drop (45 m) but *rope retrieval is more difficult. Be careful! This section is very exciting but it is very dangerous—particularly in high water.* The canyon is somewhat deceptive in high water as quite a few very experienced parties have only decided to retreat from the canyon after looking down from the chockstone. *Be careful when abseiling on to and off the chockstone.*

From the bottom of the main drop there are several short swims and drops before breaking out of the cliffline. The usual exit is to follow the creek down to the Grose and then out via the Lockley Pylon Track. A steep route lies to the east and allows one to climb directly to Butterbox Point. This route requires a short section of rope-work and is very exposed.

CARMARTHEN CANYONS

All these canyons were explored in the 1960s after an epic pioneering trip led by Col Olomon (Sydney University Bushwalkers) down Thunder Canyon. Barry Dunnet ('the Camel') and Dave Lambert (both of the Kameruka Bushwalking Club) first explored Raynon Brook. Claustral Canyon was probably first visited by Rick Higgins and Terry Thomas, but they bypassed the waterfall abseils. Members of the Kameruka Bushwalking Club were the first to descend the complete canyon. This required the placement of bolts on top of the Keyhole which was then blocked. All these canyons can be visited from Bell Road.

Thunder Canyon 1 day, 1 or 2 ropes, medium

Thunder Canyon is fairly short but dark and spectacular. Enter the creek from a ridge of Mt Charles at about 570830. A fairly long but pleasant walk downstream leads to Westerway Falls where the canyon proper begins. The falls consist of two short drops which can be abseiled directly (two abseils: 15 m, 10 m) or one abseil from a low tree further downstream (20 m). From the bottom there are a few swims (and one tricky move, through an excellent constriction) for a few hundred metres before Claustral Canyon is joined. After the junction the canyon opens up for the next 500 m. *Exits from this section are difficult.*

The walls then close up and some short drops are negotiated, *the last of which may need a hand-line.* Then follows the 'tunnel swim—a swim of about 40 m through very cold dark water. Weaker swimmers may prefer a Li-Lo here.* Shortly after is another short drop, which can be jumped, but *this requires great care as the pool contains many submerged boulders. In low water it can be downclimbed on the left. In high water a hand-over-hand down the right is needed.* After a few short swims Rainbow Ravine, the usual exit gully, enters with a waterfall on the left-hand side. It is difficult to climb up into the Ravine from here and another swim is necessary before one can climb out up a steep gully on the left (100 m downstream from the Ravine) and traverse back at the first opportunity. A few scrambles have to be negotiated before a track can be followed up on to the Camels Hump and on to Tomah South. Below Rainbow Ravine, Thunder Canyon continues with several good constricted sections and some long swims. A few steep scrambling passes exist on both sides of the creek. The pass up the nose at Carmarthen Point is fairly straightforward.

Claustral Canyon 1 day, 1 to 3 ropes depending on party size, medium

Claustral maintains its reputation as a classic canyon. It is deep and dark, with abseils right down waterfalls. Its spectacular nature and convenient access make it a very popular canyon. It can be done quickly by a small, competent party but could easily become a nightmare for a party not used to canyon conditions. Follow the track from Tomah South parking area (near the microwave relay tower) past the trig and down towards the Camels Hump. Immediately the track stops descending and reaches a small saddle, turn off, and follow a faint track that leads steeply down to the creek. A pleasant downstream walk follows. Not long after a swim two short water-jumps are negotiated. The canyon starts a few minutes' walk downstream. In case of flash flood, exits are possible in this section on both sides of the creek.

Shortly before the canyon starts, the creek drops between boulders. It is easiest to climb high on the right-hand side and then climb down into the creek. There follow three short abseils into the Black Hole of Calcutta. The abseils are technically easy (except in high water) with convenient places to unclip and pull down the rope. The highest is the third (14 m). To avoid hold-ups, it is necessary for each member of the party to have their own abseiling gear. For larger parties (more than six people) it is wise to have three ropes, so that each pitch can be rigged and nobody has to wait a long time standing or swimming in cold water. These abseils, together with the next 100 m of canyon, provide a first-class canyon experience. A waterfall, coming in on the right-hand side, 100 m below the Black Hole, marks the Raynon Brook junction. The kilometre of canyon between here and the Thunder Canyon junction is of high quality, perhaps only matched by Rocky Creek in the sustained nature of the constriction. *No exits are possible.* At the junction continue as for Thunder Canyon.

Raynon Brook 1 day, 1 (50 m) or 2 ropes, medium

This creek provides another access point into the system. Some regard this as more spectacular than Claustral. Many parties enter Raynon via Mistake Ravine from various points on the Bell Road. There are many short drops but the main abseils occur as the creek joins Claustral Canyon. This can be done with one long drop (45 m) or several short abseils down the waterfall.

Cayley Canyon 1 or 2 days, 1 rope, medium

Cayley Canyon (Explorers Brook) is less commonly visited but offers some reasonable canyoning. The creek can be entered high up from the fire road along the Explorers Range. There is one abseil close to the King George Brook junction. With *great care*, this can be jumped (10 m). Exit routes exist a short way up King George Brook (*tricky*) or up Carmarthen Point. A good, but longer trip involves reversing the lower part of Thunder Gorge and exiting up Rainbow Ravine. King George Brook can be done as a canyoning trip. Some abseiling is required.

Bowens Creek–South Branch usually 2 days, 1 short rope, medium

Bowens Creek provides intermittent canyoning of varying quality. Enter high in the headwaters or from Range Creek (Hobnail Canyon). The rope need only

be used once or twice in this branch. Passes out are fairly obvious. *Many long swims.* Parties often continue right to the Mill Creek junction. Follow up Mill Creek for a short distance and then up Tomah Spur.

Bowens Creek-North Branch 1 day, 1 rope, medium
This is another canyon worth visiting. It is more spectacular than the South Branch although not as long. It involves two one-rope abseils and a few swims. Near the junction there is a convenient pass, 100 m upstream on the west side of the South Branch. The ridge can then be followed back to the Mt Wilson Road.

WOLLANGAMBE CANYONS

Many of the canyons in this area are normally done as Li-Lo trips. Strong swimmers may prefer to do without them however. The canyons to the south have probably been known for a long time but were popularized by members of the Sydney Bushwalkers in the 1960s. The creeks further north were explored by members of the Coast and Mountain Walkers, the Kameruka Bushwalking Club and Sydney University Bushwalkers in the same decade. Additional canyons were found in the 1970s. Chris Cosgrove (SUBW) explored Short Creek on a solo trip and had to return with a party to complete the last abseil. Many small canyons, tributaries of the larger creeks, were explored. In the early 1980s members of SUBW, in particular Bob Sault and Tony Norman, systematically explored all of the smaller tributaries of the major creeks, finding many new and spectacular canyons in the process (see box).

Some of the canyons can be reached from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine. Bell Creek can easily be done using public transport to Bell Station. The creeks to the north can be reached from the Glow Worm Tunnel Road which leaves the Chifley Highway at Clarence. Fire roads can be followed towards Dumbano Creek, the Waratah Ridge as far as Pot Hill, and to Deep Pass.

Wollangambe Canyon 1–4 days, no ropes needed, Li-Los, easy
Although not as spectacular as most canyons, its easy nature and short walk-in contribute to it being the most pleasant and popular of all the canyons. Although there are numerous short constrictions high in its headwaters, the main canyon begins at about 526914 and continues at least until 592920. One short section from 545912 to 559914 is visited most frequently, although the canyon is more spectacular upstream and downstream from these points. There are many entrances and exits to the canyon, the most common ones being 542913 (track from Mt Wilson War Memorial), 545912, 559914, 570923 and 582912. No ropes are needed although two water-jumps are encountered along the way. There are many campsites in caves and on sandbanks along the canyon. The northern tributaries at 554914 (Crayfish Canyon) and 566917 (Whungee Wheengee Canyon) are well worth investigating, being more spectacular than Wollangambe Canyon itself. Both require abseiling.

Clatterteeth Canyon (Du Faurs Creek) 1 day, no ropes, Li-Los, easy
Also known as Chatterbox Canyon. Darker and more constricted than Wollangambe Canyon although not as sustained. Enter by October Creek at 532881. Cars are normally left on the zigzag bend on the way to Mt Wilson. Exit from the Wollangambe by the track at 542913.

Bell Creek 1–2 days, no ropes, Li-Los, medium
This creek compares favourably with Dumbano Creek in that both have long sections of canyon with dark icy pools. Bell Creek is canyon from high up near its source to where it joins Du Faurs Creek. Many parties only visit the lower constriction as a day trip by crossing Du Faurs Creek at 536891 (*tricky*) and entering Bell Creek by a spectacular side tributary at 524898 (10 m rope needed). A good trip is to enter the creek high up and return by reversing Clatterteeth Canyon.

Yarramun Creek 2 days, 1 short rope, medium
A nice creek but never really sustained. Both the north and south branches can be entered high up. A short drop is found in the south branch and 20 m of rope is needed here. The tunnel in the north branch near the junction is well worth visiting. The canyon continues intermittently until at least 576970.

Dumbano Creek 1 or 2 days, 1 rope, medium/hard
High quality, sustained in places. Both the north and south branch (Cesspit Canyon) are worth doing. There are numerous entrances and exit points from both the south and north. The best part is the lower constriction beginning near 533994. *Weak swimmers may prefer Li-Los in Dumbano Creek.* Many of the smaller side tributaries are canyons and are well worth investigating.

Short Creek 2 days, 2 ropes, medium
More of a gorge than a canyon, but unusually deep and spectacular. Route finding is needed to cross Wollangambe Gorge and the *navigation across the northern Lost Flat is tricky.* Enter the creek at or above 608973. Two abseils, 12 m, 25 m (bolt belay); about 60 m of rope is advised to make retrieval easier.

Bungleboori Creek
Bungleboori Creek flows through the heart of the Wollangambe Wilderness. Its north and south branches are superb creeks, cutting rugged gorges. In places the walls narrow to form canyon sections and compulsory swims are found here. Quite a few of the side creeks of both branches are canyons. Some of these are as spectacular as any of the sandstone canyons in the more popular areas. Their difficulty and remoteness make them only suitable for experienced and competent parties. None of these canyons are described in this guide.

Blue Mountains Canyons

Deep Pass Canyon 1 very short day, 1 rope, easy
This canyon lies in the upper headwaters of Nayook Creek and flows out to Deep Pass clearing. It is not outstandingly spectacular but worth visiting. It is one of many interesting features in the Deep Pass area.

DARGANS CREEK

Dargans Creek Canyon 1 day, no ropes, easy
Dargans Creek has an interesting section of canyon about one kilometre below the lower of the two dams that can be seen just off the Chifley Highway. From the dam, climb down a steep ladder and then follow the creek downstream. The canyon is straightforward and has only about one swim. To exit, the creek can be followed downstream, the canyon reversed, or the tributary at 442907 can be reversed by climbing up some old spikes in a tree.

WOLGAN CANYONS

The canyons in this area were first explored in 1975-80, largely by members of SUBW after the area was popularized for walking by Ted Daniels. All the tributaries of Rocky Creek, Deanes Creek and Annie Rowan Creek were systematically explored and many canyons were found. Other tributaries of the Wolgan below Newnes, north and south of the river, were also found to contain canyons.

To reach these canyons turn off the Chifley Highway at the Glow Worm Tunnel Road and continue along this. Fire roads to Galah Mountain and beyond are clearly marked on the *Rock Hill* and *Mt Morgan* 1:25,000 CMA maps. A labyrinth of smaller roads, some now blocked off, the legacy of logging and drilling programmes, make navigation more interesting.

Tiger Snake Canyon 1 day, 1 rope, easy/medium
A very short canyon but quite remarkable. It is very narrow and dark. Begins at 442206 with a short drop (although further upstream is worth while and includes an abseil). Passes exist near Deanes Creek or out by Constance Gorge.

Surefire Canyon 1 day, 1 rope, medium
A nice canyon, with easy access to and from it; a very pleasant trip. The canyon formation is varied, dark and spectacular. The quickest way in is to go along an old drilling-site road that leaves the fire track at 457192. From where this ends it is usually possible to make your way down through the top cliffline without abseiling, to reach the creek shortly before it canyons out. The canyon begins at 475200. The canyon only has three short abseils, *the last two having tricky starts.* The last drop can now be climbed down. The canyon ends not long after the junction of the west branch, in a large cave. It is possible, with careful route finding, to reverse the western tributary and continue up it to join the fire road at 460208. Alternatively, the creek can be followed downstream to Rocky Creek.

Heart Attack Canyon 1 day, 2 ropes, medium
The most spectacular thing about this canyon is the dramatic first abseil. Without warning the creek drops into a fissure 30 m deep. The rest of the canyon is very pleasant although not particularly dark. Enter the creek from the road at 471184 (Murrys Mountain). An abseil is usually required for the top cliffline. Canyon begins at 487188 with a 32 m abseil. There are a few wades and a short second abseil near the end of the canyon. One exit is by the easy gully at 483194.

Thunderstorm Canyon 1 day, 2 ropes, medium
This creek also features a high abseil. It can easily be reached from the Mt Cameron Track. The canyon begins at 500162 and continues until Rocky Creek is reached. A convenient pass can be found at the junction up to the ridge to the south.

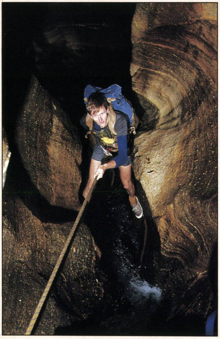
Rocky Creek Canyon 1 short day, no ropes, easy
A horizontal canyon that is similar to Claustral Canyon in the sustained quality of its constriction, this canyon is an outstanding geomorphological feature that is not yet in Wollemi National Park—although it lies a short distance from the boundary. Most parties miss out on the earlier canyon and abseil higher up in Rocky Creek. The common way into the canyon is to enter by the western tributary that meets Rocky Creek where its lower constriction starts at 480132. This small gully now has a track to the start of the canyon. This track can be found at the bottom of the steep logging road that leads off Galah Mountain in the direction of the canyon. The canyon conditions continue, the creek becoming darker as one proceeds, until the Budgary Creek junction is reached. The canyon itself is very straightforward and can easily be reversed if one can put up with the cold swims twice. Many other exits can be found downstream from the Budgary Creek junction. Rocky Creek is a magnificent gorge and gives very pleasant walking immediately below the canyon.

OTHER SANDSTONE CANYON AREAS

The whole of the northern Blue Mountains is a giant sandstone plateau, and many creeks on the western side flow through canyons for part of their length. Many of the smaller tributaries of the Capertee and Wollemi Rivers contain excellent canyons. The formations are of high quality and sustained in places but few of the canyons have long swims. There is excellent scope for more exploration in this large section of Wollemi National Park. Some of the tributaries of Widden Brook are canyons; many more probably await exploration. The Bylong Labyrinth, in the north-west of Wollemi National Park, is a maze of pagoda rock formations; many small canyons are to be found here.

KANANGRA CANYONS

The Kanangra canyons are quite different in quality



Abseiling into the bowels of Mistake Ravine. Steve Prothero

to the sandstone canyons of the central and northern Blue Mountains. The creeks of the Boyd Plateau cut through older metamorphosed rocks. There are no dark constrictions but in places the creeks form narrow slots.

Near Kanangra Walls are the five great 'deeps' of Myles Dunphy who explored and mapped the area in the period 1910–30. These are the Kanangra Deep, Whalania Deep, Shamash Deep, Tartarus Deep and Morong Deep. Also to be found are 'pits' such as Paralyser Pit, Guouogang Pit, and the Pit of Seriphos which joins Danae Brook.

Kalang Falls 1 day, 2 ropes, medium

Kalang Falls is a series of waterfalls that start near Echo Head and tumble down the side of the Kanangra Deep. With easy access and a spectacular setting, it is little wonder that this trip has become very popular—parties should bear this in mind when considering their starting time and party size. For large parties several sets of ropes should be used.

From the old Kanangra Car-park, walk along the track to Echo Head and follow the track to the north-west down a spur into Kanangra Brook. The first waterfall starts about 100 m downstream. It can easily be abseiled down the right-hand side from a tree belay (35 m). The next waterfall is a 50 m drop and can be descended in one abseil (*be careful of rope jam*) or in two short drops. The belay is a tree on the right-hand side. The next two waterfalls are best abseiled on the left-hand side—*be careful of rope jams when retrieving the rope, especially on the long (50 m) fourth abseil.* The next few waterfalls are quite small and can be abseiled or scrambled round. The fun starts again with a 30 m abseil down a ramp on the left side of a waterfall. If the ramp is wet, it is all too easy to pendulum into the waterfall.

Not far below is the highlight of the trip, a waterfall about 70 m high. This is abseiled in two stages on the left (sling needed for belay). *Make sure you stop about half-way down on a convenient ledge and use a tree belay to reach the bottom.* The last waterfall can be bypassed by scrambling or abseiling (40 m) on the right.

The usual exit is the gully 100 m downstream from the Kanangra Creek junction. This gully, *Murdering Gully, can be difficult and dangerous in wet weather.* It is a short steep climb to the defile between Kanangra Walls and the car-park (30 minutes to 1½ hours).

Note: many of the waterfalls can be scrambled, and Murdering Gully can be reached from many places by sidling and scrambling.

Kanangra Falls 1 day, 2 ropes (both at least 50 m), hard

Kanangra Falls consist of half a dozen giant waterfalls at the head of the Kanangra Deep. Until fairly recently, the main fall (100 m) had to be bypassed by scrambling routes on the right-hand side. Now there are two routes down the main fall. Both rely on sets of bolts. One set goes down the face of the main fall just to the right of the water. The other set goes down the dark slot behind the main fall. Bolt belays can also be used for most of the lower falls. *Many lengths of thin sling are needed for all the bolt belays. There are many loose rocks, particularly in the slot and great care should be taken—helmets should be worn. Many of the stances will not accommodate large parties. Two or more sets of ropes should be carried depending on party size. They should be 50 m or longer; 45 m ropes are too short for the second drop in the slot. Also, in the slot, the starts of many abseils are awkward, and some could be very dangerous in even normal water levels (the bolts were placed during the drought of the early 1980s). All party members should be experienced at route finding, abseiling and climbing.*

To start the trip, leave the Kanangra Road at the Clay Ruins (500 metres back from the car-park) and cross the Kittani Heath to eventually reach the top of the main fall. Climb round on a large ledge to the left, level with the fall and locate a set of bolts where the ledge begins to peter out. From here a series of long abseils begin down the slot. *Great care needs to be taken in this section, particularly in rigging the second belay point.* Continue down until it is possible to reach a large ledge on the right-hand side. From here it is possible to drop down to a large gully that, incidentally, provides a fairly straightforward scrambling route back to the top of the falls. From the bottom of this gully the waterfalls are more spread out and the going is somewhat easier. After a 50 m abseil, the top of an 80 m fall is soon reached. *This requires considerable scouting and caution to descend.* Several more large drops must still be negotiated before it is possible to walk along an easy creek-bed and climb out by Murdering Gully as described for Kalang Falls.

Dione Dell 1 short day, 2 ropes, easy

Dione Dell is the name given to the canyon high in Christys Creek. It is also named Myles Chasm after Myles Dunphy. This is the easiest canyon in the area and is an enjoyable trip and suitable for beginners. If necessary, each waterfall can be climbed round without abseiling. Enter a side creek from the Kanangra Road about two kilometres back from the car-park at the walls. This is a very pleasant walk to the first fall at the junction with Christys Creek. It can be abseiled or scrambled on the right. Another fall soon follows which can be abseiled from trees on the left or right. The best waterfall lies about ten minutes downstream. Here, the water tumbles out of sight round a corner. Scramble down to a low ledge on the right for a 35 m abseil on to a ledge near the bottom. Further downstream, another short abseil completes the canyon. To climb out, walk to Margaret Falls, then climb out on to a spur to the left to join the Colboyd Range Track. Follow this up past Uranus Grotto to Wallaby Pass and then over Pindari Tops to the Kanangra Road.

Middle Christys Creek usually 2 days, 2 x 50 m ropes, medium/hard

Christys Creek below Dione Dell provides a worthwhile trip. Margaret Falls can be reached by going down Dione Dell as described above, or by going down the Colboyd Range Track. The major difficulty is Margaret Falls itself (100 m). It can be scrambled easily to the left—a fair way from the creek—down a long scree or abseiled in stages down a steep bank 100 m to the right of the fall. Note that most of the main fall overhangs. Below Margaret Falls are more abseils and some swims.

East Christys Creek 1–2 days, ropes optional, medium

This creek can be entered high up by following the gully that leads down from the defile between Kanangra Walls and the old car-park. This creek is very beautiful and contains numerous waterfalls and cascades, many of which make attractive abseils. None are particularly difficult to scramble round.

West Christys Creek 1–2 days, 2 x 50 m ropes, medium/hard

The two branches of this creek, Wheengee Whungee and Wooglemai Creeks, make excellent trips. *Be very careful of loose rocks on the major waterfalls.*

Wooglemai Creek has a large waterfall (45 m) that drops into a narrow defile. This is followed by a shorter drop. The main waterfall in Wheengee Whungee Creek is too large for a single direct abseil. This fall can be scrambled round or abseiled to the left with some careful scouting for belay points. After these two creeks meet there is a whole series of waterfalls. Several of these are high, and all are worth visiting.

Note: it is possible for a fast party to reach the Kowmung River from the headwaters of any of the branches of Christys Creek in one long day. With their enticing crystal-clear pools, any of these creeks would make a delightful summer trip.

Danae Brook 1 long day, 2 ropes, hard

The 'Brook' is a very exciting and spectacular canyon. *It is a serious undertaking suitable for experienced parties only. Nearly all the abseils have awkward starts and finishes and great care needs to be taken to avoid jamming ropes. This canyon can be very difficult and dangerous in high water.* Even in good conditions incompetent parties have found themselves benighted in the canyon. Parties of more than three people should carry two or more sets of ropes and adopt a leap-frog technique. An early start should be made and the top of the first waterfall reached well before 9 am.

Danae can be reached from the Mt Thurat Road (enter the creek high up to avoid scrub) or by walking from the Clay Ruins on the Kanangra Road (500 m back from the car-park at the Walls) and then walking to the creek by Big Misty. The first waterfall is usually scrambled on the left to reach the lowest tree for a belay in a slot. The next five abseils are classics. The second is over several giant chockstones into an icy pool. Then follows an abseil straight down a waterfall. The third is from a thread belay down a dark hole and is perhaps the highlight of the trip (although this abseil can be avoided by another—abseiling off a tree to the left). It is also possible, although difficult, to climb out of the canyon from the top of this abseil by climbing up a very steep gully to the left. The fifth abseil is known as the Slippery Log Abseil because of a large log wedged into the bottom of the fall. Either a chockstone or bolts on the left along a nasty ledge can be used as a belay. Usually the rope cannot be thrown the whole way down the waterfall so the first person down has a difficult job untangling the rope as they go. *This waterfall is very difficult in high water.*

From the bottom of this drop the canyon opens up somewhat and the going is easier. After several short drops and some swims the final long abseil is reached. This can be abseiled from a piton belay on the left. *Be careful of rope jams here.* There is a pleasant lunch-site at the bottom of this fall. It is an unpleasant campsite for slow parties. Now follows a massive boulder chute enclosed between enormous towering walls. It is great fun scrambling down the boulders although *great care needs to be taken.* A short drop into a pool completes the canyon.

Exit routes lie up over Thurat Spires (needing one abseil)—very spectacular, up Kanangra Creek to Murdering Gully, or climb out directly opposite the Danae Brook–Kanangra Creek junction up on to the Kilpatrick Causeway.

Thurat Rift 1–2 days, 2 x 50 m ropes, medium/hard

This provides an excellent trip for experienced parties used to scouting belay points, scrambling and route-finding. It features quite a few long abseils (50 m) and some steep scrambling. The creek is best entered high up from Mt Thurat, to avoid scrub on the ridges. The nature of the trip is similar to Danae Brook but less committing.

Carra Beanga Brook 2 days, 2 x 50 m ropes, medium/hard

Another excellent trip similar in character to Kalang Falls. Like many creeks in this area it should only be attempted by parties experienced with finding belay points, route finding and scrambling. This creek can be entered from the Thurat–Paralyser Range. The main waterfall, the first really big drop, is best abseiled on the right-hand side.

Davies Canyon 2 days, 2 x 50 m ropes, medium/hard

Drop into Sally Camp Creek high up from the Thurat–Paralyser Range (or elsewhere). This creek is particularly spectacular in the manner of Kanangra Falls. The major difficulties are encountered on the second waterfall (50 m), which *requires a careful choice of belay point.* The higher fall at the bottom of the canyon can be partly down-climbed.

Other Kanangra Area Canyons

The following creeks contain waterfalls that can be abseiled or scrambled. They can be done as abseiling or bushwalking trips (none has compulsory swims): Mumbedah Creek, Whalania Creek, Ti Willa Creek, Gingra Creek (upper part), Mathesons Creek, Hanrahans Creek, Doris and Waterfall Creeks. **W**

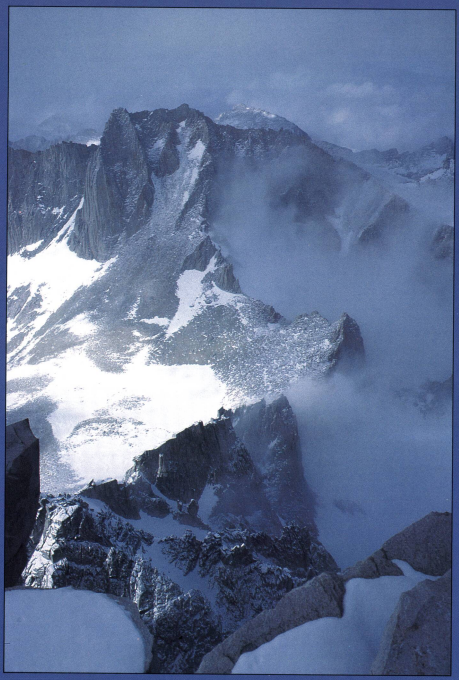
David Noble (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) has been a Special Adviser to *Wild* from our second issue. He is one of the best-known bushwalkers in NSW and an authority on walking and canyoning in the Blue Mountains, as well as a much-published wilderness photographer.

Barry Slade

Flat spider. All photos were taken in Royal National Park, New South Wales.

Shiny fan fern and eucalypt. ***Right****, big spider flower.* ***Inset****, acacia pods.*

SKIING CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SIERRA



A committing and eventful trip in some of the world's best ski-touring country, with *Ian Brown*

● TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES TO THE mysteries of skiing in the foreign land of the USA, we started with a trip from Yosemite Valley eastwards across the Sierra Nevada to Mammoth Lakes, a downhill skiing resort of horrifying proportions. We learnt a lot during this week of excellent weather—about gear, snow conditions, bears (none were about) and topography. Waxless skis and skins proved to be an excellent choice.

A week in the civilized Owens valley saw us fully reorganized, our figures filled out (Jack's Waffle Shop is the recommended venue) and our wallets much lighter. We also managed a quick visit to Death Valley and we hung two food caches strategically from trees high on the eastern sides of Bishop and Kearsarge Passes, with eight to nine days' supplies in each.

Our chosen route for the long traverse to the south threaded principally along the western side of the Sierra Crest, between the foothills and valleys of thick forest and the high, sharp peaks. The lake basins around the timberline at 3,000–3,500 metres are linked by high passes over the many ranges branching west from the Crest, exposed sidles and the occasional dip into the delights of the 'canyons'. The route was a composite of the buried Muir Trail, the summer Sierra High Route and variations worked out from local advice and our own analysis. Ahead lay 270 kilometres of unknown mountain wilderness.

We started in mid-March from the winter roadhead at 2,500 metres on Rock Creek on the eastern side of the range. From there, tracks laid by the ski-touring lodge led easily up amongst the peaks. Problems appeared immediately in the form of blisters, then an exhausting second day in soft snow. This culminated in a desperate struggle on foot up steep, thigh-deep stuff in blinding spindrift to reach a Crest 'pass' at 4,000 metres beside Bear Creek Spire. Thus we established ourselves on the western side of the range. The sudden view of ridge after ridge of frozen, ragged peaks, all blurred by snow whipped from their slopes, was enough for me to feel more than a twinge of fear at the journey upon which the two of us had embarked. The apprehension, which is of the essence of wilderness, was to return repeatedly in the weeks ahead when things got tough.

The next day was one of hot, uphill grinds and glorious lake basins. Then the High Route headed the glacial gorges of French and Darwin Canyons in weather that constantly threatened but never quite delivered. In Evolution Basin we joined the Muir Trail for a day or so. When we reached the stone hut on Muir Pass on our fifth day we found that only one other party had been there all winter, in January. This frigid granite beehive is the only one available for use in the whole region we traversed. Even though we were never more than two days from roads on the eastern side, in bad conditions crossing

The author climbing out of Woods Creek. John Benson. ***Below****, dramatic but exposed campsites were the norm; camp at 3,500 metres in Dusy Basin.* Ian Brown ***Left****, from the summit of Mt Whitney (at 4,418 metres the high point of the trip) Mt Russell rises through cloud to the north.* Brown

the Crest to reach them could have proved impossible. It felt pretty lonely out there.

Descending into Le Conte Canyon through exasperating crust late in the day, John suddenly went down in a heap, having hurt his ankle badly on a submerged rock. We stopped for a day to wonder about helicopters. Although he decided to press on, it remained a constant source of uncertainty and a significant and painful handicap to his skiing and enjoyment. It also subdued his penchant for sweeping down the hills in graceful turns, which allowed me with my more plodding style to keep up a little more easily. But the resultant worry and tension, combined with the more objective difficulties of the trip, put us both on edge and often led to stupid bickering. On returning to Australia, he discovered he had actually fractured a small bone in his ankle.

The final day to our first cache took us down the incomparable Le Conte Canyon in perfect spring corn and then up a big grind into Dusy Basin and Bishop Pass at the feet of the Palisades. The awesome buttresses that lined Le Conte Canyon formed probably the most spectacular setting of the whole traverse. The scene was highlighted by a pair of white goshawks that appeared for only a few seconds, soaring high above a clean granite spire in the blue sky, and then were gone—as if they had only strayed by accident from some higher realm.

At Bishop Pass we climbed Mt Agassiz (4,207 metres), collected our cache

The High Sierra

Ian Brown

● THE SIERRA NEVADA (ROUGHLY TRANSLATABLE from the Spanish as 'Snowy Range') extends in a north-south direction for over 650 kilometres through California in western USA. It is the longest continuous mountain range in the USA outside Alaska and includes the highest peaks in that area, culminating in Mt Whitney (4,418 metres) towards the southern end. The Sierra has been described as the country's 'premier scenic and recreational area'. It is also well known as the area that inspired John Muir's visionary and far-reaching concern for wild places.

The Sierra Nevada is like a huge tilted table, plummeting steeply as a fault scarp into the Owens valley on the east but sloping back gently to the west as a heavily-dissected plateau. Past glaciation has scoured a spectacular mountain landscape, with all the steepness generally associated with the predominantly granitic geology. Now only small shelf and cirque glaciers remain, clinging to the feet of the highest peaks.

John Muir's 'Range of Light' is no longer the pristine wilderness the Indians and he once roamed. Many areas, especially the foothills, have been subjected to the usual array of changes wrought by western civilization. However, much of the high country is either national forest or National Park and managed as wilderness, despite the extensive track network. The High Sierra is the most intact, being that part of the range between Sonora Pass near Yosemite Valley in the north, and just south of Mt Whitney. Here the ragged peaks pull above the forest with high valleys and lakes in tow. For over 140 kilometres the Sierra Crest does not fall below 3,300 metres and no roads cross the range for over 200 kilometres—one of the country's largest roadless areas outside Alaska.

The area's most famous attraction is Yosemite Valley, which is a magnet for tourists and climbers from all over the world. In summer the whole range is trampled by hordes of 'backpackers' and horse-riders out to sample the perfect weather, good 'trails' and magnificent scenery of forest, gorge, lake and peak.

In winter, the High Sierra becomes a great fastness, deep in snow and mostly abandoned to the coyotes and birds of prey that range its lonely slopes. The summer tracks, campsites, and most access roads are buried. Deep winter is reputed to be desperately cold and beset by violent storms and huge snowfalls. Few skiers probe far beyond the touring and downhill skiing resorts. But when the stable summer weather pattern of the Mediterranean climate begins to assert itself, usually in April, and the snow settles into spring corn and the avalanche danger diminishes, skiers emerge from their winter training grounds for what must be some of the finest ski touring to be found anywhere. The mountains are as fine as any high mountains, but without the same level of danger from avalanches and glacier travel found in the more glaciated ranges.

The modern era of trans-Sierra skiing was apparently ushered in when Doug Robinson and a partner skied the full length of the famed Muir Trail, 340 kilometres from Yosemite to Mt Whitney, in 1970. Similar trips have been done a number of times since, and probably all the subsidiary ranges have been traversed at least once. A couple of commercial outfits even offer long guided trips in the area. Still, extended ski trips in the High Sierra remain something of a fringe activity. A small band of extreme tourers have been pushing the Crest route ever higher over the peaks, but this will always remain an esoteric attraction for those who enjoy Telemarking narrow couloirs and carrying their skis a lot. ■

(which survived perfectly) and had another rest day due to a fierce wind. Here we met the only other people we saw on the whole trip other than on the first and last days. Two snow surveyors were assessing the amount of melt-water that could be expected next summer. Apparently Los Angeles and the vast agricultural areas of California's Central Basin depend almost completely on the water yield from the High Sierra.

The route below the 4,250 metre peaks of the Palisades was still windy, icy and unpleasant. This was especially so for John, as sidling to the right was painful for him. This weather pattern persisted for most of the remainder of the trip as front after front moved rapidly across the range but brought little snow. The weather was rarely the same for more than a few hours at a time, with the storms seeming to catch us on every pass. Fortunately the mornings were often fine and sunny, allowing us to dry out after the nights, when the temperature generally fell to -10 to -15ºC. Then, on the wrong side of Glen Pass from our second and final cache, a storm hit that threatened to be the 'Big One' that haunted each of our days and nights. About 30 centimetres of snow was followed by a clearing dawn of -26ºC—a breath of deep winter just to keep us thinking. As we wallowed up the pass later in the day, ice crystals were falling from a clear sky. On the other side we precariously front-pointed in our crampons and bendy boots into another storm rolling up the valley.

Few of the passes were easy, with most requiring the abandonment of skis in the upper reaches due to steep soft snow, bare rock, ice or steep hard snow. The crampons and ice axes which we laboriously carried on our 35 kilogram packs were put to good use on many occasions and a rope would have been nice once or twice. We also carried avalanche bleepers, a snow shovel each and stocks that could be converted into avalanche probes. Thankfully none of these proved essential. Skiing conditions ran the full gamut from icy crust and firm wind-pack to soft powder and bottomless blue sugar and any combination of these, often all in one day.

The route was a kaleidoscope of frozen lakes and bare ridges, deep glacial gorges, pine forest, spectacular peaks and 14 high passes. The best and the worst times linger in the memory. After crossing the first pass, I lead off on an increasingly icy, rock-strewn traverse, with a big drop below. In a precarious combined operation, we managed to change into our crampons and continued across with John cursing my stupidity. One day we poled steadily down a broad basin in bursts of clearing sunshine as the peaks emerged from the latest storm. Many times we suddenly broke from the forest into the spacious arena of a high valley encircled by jutting rock peaks. In the steep gorge of Woods Creek we side-slipped 1,000 metres and many kilometres through the trees on frozen corn, against an oncoming storm. With buckling legs and thoughts of retreat, camp was made in superb forest as the 'porridge' descended in suffocating quantities. Half an hour later, after a miraculous clearing, all was calm and sunny as we both dashed around with cameras in a rapid thaw. There was a superb day (one of the few) on which we retrieved our final cache and climbed the easy Mt Gould for a grand view. Many evenings we spent an interminable four hours cooking dinner in the dark due to a problem with our stove.

As we approached the final obstacle before the Mt Whitney area, the Kings–Kern Divide, we faced some difficult choices. When locals had been asked about a winter crossing of Foresters Pass on the Muir Trail, there was much shaking of heads, and mutterings of 'funky. . .funky' had been elicited. This, combined with the knowledge that the track was finally made up the south side by blasting a route from the cliff-face, did not inspire confidence. We opted for a longer alternative over two other passes. This involved a double crossing of the Crest, one of which reached 4,025 metres, our highest point with full packs. The crossing proved strenuous but unremarkable but for the desert barrenness of the eastern side, with the snow line at 3,300 metres. Double-poling achieved a new meaning here, as we wobbled across vast dry boulder fields towards Shepherd Pass using our stocks for support.

The top of Shepherd Pass was the edge of an expansive plateau that allowed fast running down gentle slopes, with the dramatic peaks of the Kaweahs and huge masses of cumulus rising beside the westering sun. This undulating plateau led very pleasantly along beneath the high peaks to Mt Whitney. This part of the range is dramatically rain-shadowed by the Great Western Divide, and most of the peaks were virtually bare. Snow cover in the valley was thin and patchy but adequate, and turning at last from crust and ice to the longed-for corn. Everyone had told us 'Aaarrggh . . . it's too early . . . too much snowfall . . . avalanches . . . wind . . . crust. April is the scene . . . spring corn . . . perfect weather.' Much of this was true—snow conditions were generally poor and the weather was best described as mixed and erratic. However, at this stage of the trip we realized that if we had left it any later in this apparently 'average or above' year, we would have worn out

a lot more boot rubber. Yet the previous year had seen big snowfalls and desperate touring conditions well into May. You make your plans and take your chances. And perhaps we had seen a few things the perfection-loving and technically-obsessed Americans missed.

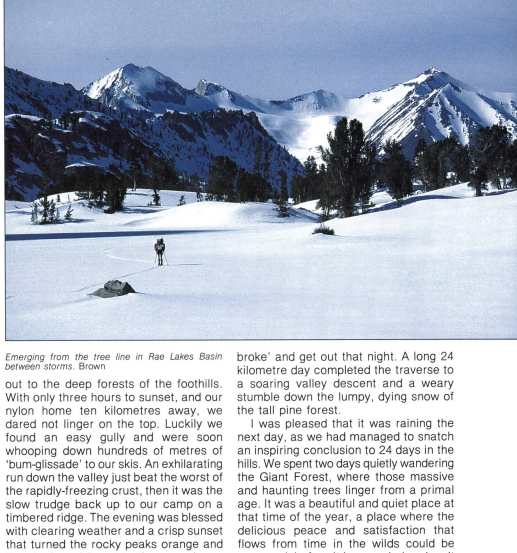
We could spare only one day for an attempt on Mt Whitney (4,418 metres), so despite ominous weather we made for it, placing our camp as low as possible to minimize backtracking with full packs. From the west, the mountain is a nondescript elephant of scree and rock spurs, flanked by the more impressive walls and buttresses of lower peaks. It was lurking in cloud, wind-blasted and spattered with fresh snow. Quite unappetizing. Picking a route was difficult, as the summit was obscured. After dropping skis, we half-heartedly started up a scree slope leading into a steep rock and snow couloir that became lost in a maze of ridges and gullies up high. Steady snow showers and a cold wind dampened our enthusiasm still further, but gradually the enterprise developed its own momentum. Then, only 100 metres below the plateau, we were stopped by difficult climbing through powder snow on the steep flank of a ridge with acres of smooth granite slabs below. We were ready to turn back, having no time left to descend and try another line. On a last-ditch search we burrowed out a way on to a sharp rock ridge. After exhilarating climbing through powder snow and blocks we burst on to the summit plateau just as the cloud lifted.

We were very happy to get there. Even though Mt Whitney is so high and famous, it must be one of the most trampled mountains worth the name in the world. Throngs of hopefuls toil up the steep track on its arid eastern slopes every summer, to be greeted by the historic stone hut that squats offensively on the broad summit.

But then, with the clean wind of April pouring over us, it was deserted and beautiful. Swirling cloud brought flurries of snow but swept past to reveal the golden buttresses of nearby peaks shining in misty sunlight. The great abyss of the east face was lost in gloomy vapours and there was only a glimpse of the Owens valley over 3,000 metres below.

Whether we would ever reach that point had been constantly in doubt even up to the very end. Apart from the usual fears of hard unknown country and the problems of mountain travel, all the forces of entropy seemed to be aligned against us, wearing us down—blisters and sunburn, illness and injury, irritation and disagreement, gear breaking down and collapsing all around us. These things had us on tenterhooks the whole way, and any day could have seen an aborted trip.

The continual uncertainty of our progress made the culmination on Mt Whitney rather special—a natural conclusion to our southward journey and the ambition of traversing a major part of the High Sierra. Now we would turn westward, along another high range and



Emerging from the tree line in Rae Lakes Basin between storms. Brown

out to the deep forests of the foothills. With only three hours to sunset, and our nylon home ten kilometres away, we dared not linger on the top. Luckily we found an easy gully and were soon whooping down hundreds of metres of 'bum-glissade' to our skis. An exhilarating run down the valley just beat the worst of the rapidly-freezing crust, then it was the slow trudge back up to our camp on a timbered ridge. The evening was blessed with clearing weather and a crisp sunset that turned the rocky peaks orange and the shadowed forest to deep purple.

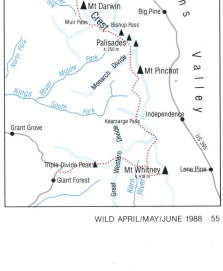
The next day we ambled down a snow-free track into springtime at 2,400 metres on the Kern River, our lowest point. The weather was all blue and gold, with birds calling, butterflies by the river and lilies sprouting by the damp trackside. But the chill night had left icicles perched on the orange granite bluffs like a host of temporary angels.

The final 50 kilometres of our route crossed the gorge of the Kern then climbed back to 3,700 metres on the Great Western Divide and through several high passes to a descent into the Giant Forest area of Sequoia National Park. The climb out of the Kern was a frustrating experience of on-agin, off-again skiing until we could follow continuous snow from 2,900 metres. Then it was back into winter for a difficult day traversing to Triple Divide Peak in wind and cloud. We were later to discover that this route is given the status of California's equivalent to the European Alps' Haute Route in a ski-touring guide to California.

The next day was magnificent—ploughing white fields of soft snow past clean granite spires with expansive views in all directions. But bad weather was threatening again so we decided to 'go for broke' and get out that night. A long 24 kilometre day completed the traverse to a soaring valley descent and a weary stumble down the lumpy, dying snow of the tall pine forest.

I was pleased that it was raining the next day, as we had managed to snatch an inspiring conclusion to 24 days in the hills. We spent two days quietly wandering the Giant Forest, where those massive and haunting trees linger from a primal age. It was a beautiful and quiet place at that time of the year, a place where the delicious peace and satisfaction that flows from time in the wilds could be savoured, before it is overwhelmed as it always is, too soon; when the experience fades to a dream. W

Sierra Nevada



Freycinet National Park

Track Notes

A gentle introduction to Tasmanian walking, with *Stephen Bunton*

● MOST PEOPLE THINK OF TASMANIAN BUSH-walking in terms of the South-west . . . rain jackets, thermal wear, muddy boots and gaiters. The uncertainty of the weather adds interest to trips and makes that rare glimpse of dramatic scenery an even more cherished experience. The draw-card is always the spectacular geological features—the quartzite crags and dolerite columns that bear names familiar to us all. So, what else is there to do in Tasmania if you don't want to tangle with the South-west, or if the weather has been kind to you and you've walked the Western Arthurs in a week and you now have time up your sleeve? There is the east coast and its show-piece, the Freycinet Peninsula.

With equally spectacular geology, characterized by huge red granite monoliths and a more moderate climate supporting a less dense, friendlier scrub, the Freycinet provides a pleasant alternative to mainstream bushwalking in Tasmania.

Centred on Coles Bay, 200 kilometres north-east of Hobart, is the Freycinet National Park, which includes the whole of the Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island. The park includes most of the area of interest to bushwalkers but sadly excludes the spectacular sea cliffs around Cape Tourville and at White-water Wall which are renowned throughout Australia's rockclimbing community. Surpassed only in height by the cliffs of Mt Buffalo, Coles Bay provides some of the best granite climbing and certainly the best sea cliff climbing in the country. The climbing area is covered by a Lands Department Reserve bordering on the northern boundary of the Freycinet National Park. Even in winter, the climbs are sunny and warm, providing interest to the full range of abilities. There are a few climbs on the giant slabs of the Hazards, but generally the Hazards are the domain of the bushwalker.

From the vantage point of Freycinet's granite mountains it is common to see whales cruising down the seaward coast, and seals playing as they swim by. Sea eagles circle overhead in search of food which is often in the form of a large cuttlefish. Along the inland coast, pied oyster catchers graze on the mussel beds exposed at low tide. Little pied cormorants watch from the rocks as crested terns, Australian gannets, southern skuas and black-backed gulls circle continuously in search of food. On Refuge Island there is a mutton bird colony which is thankfully safe from hunters due to the island's inclusion in the National Park. The area has always provided rich food resources as is evidenced by the number and enormous size of midden deposits in the area. These must represent many hundreds of years of Aboriginal settlement in the area.

When the prevailing Tasmanian weather is south-westerly, the Freycinet Peninsula lies comfortably in the lee of our rain-drenched island State. This less severe climate and open dry sclerophyll forest make it a more suitable venue for an introduction to the outdoors. It is often used by schools, youth training groups and outdoor adventure organizations for this purpose. Sea canoeists regularly paddle round its rugged indented coast, scuba divers dabble in its depths, and commercially the area is important for abalone divers, crayfishermen and oyster farmers. Their vessels regularly chug around the coastline or moor at Coles Bay, giving the whole region a quaint nautical backdrop more atuned to the Tasmanian way of life than other bushwalking areas. Fishing boats regularly anchor in Wineglass Bay, one of the State's more famous beaches and a popular overnight camping spot. Unfortunately, the accessibility of such places and the lack of climatic severity have led to their overuse and the despoilation of campsites by people with little respect for the environment.

Maps. The whole of the Freycinet Peninsula is covered by the Tasmap *Freycinet* 1:100,000 sheet. A more useful map, however, is the National Parks & Wildlife Service 1:50,000 map *Freycinet National Park*, produced in conjunction with Tasmap.

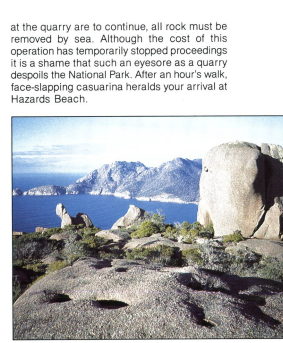
Access. The Ranger Station for the Freycinet National Park lies 500 metres beyond the township of Coles Bay. Coles Bay is 26 kilometres from the Tasman Highway, which runs along Tasmania's east coast. The turn-off is 11 kilometres south of Bicheno, or 31 kilometres north of Swansea. Roads beyond the park headquarters are well marked. The Peninsula Track starts at the car-park 4 kilometres from the Ranger Station.

The walks. There are a number of possibilities for combining short walks for more extended trips. (Similarly, it is possible to walk only part of the Peninsula Track.)

The Peninsula Track

To Hazards Beach, one and a half hours

The Coles Bay Road continues beyond the Ranger Station, along Richardsons Beach and across the front of the Hazards to a car-park above Parsons Cove. Like all car-parks in Tasmanian National Parks that attract a large number of tourists, this one is inhabited by a population of Bennets wallabies which beg food with soulful eyes. Signs warn of the dangers of lumpy jaw from feeding them processed food and suggest they only be given fresh vegetables. Beyond the car-park the track branches after 100 metres. To the left is the way to Wineglass Bay which rises over the saddle between Mt Amos and Mt Mayson. Straight ahead the track to Hazards Beach skirts round the lower slopes of Mt Mayson. Between the tall eucalypts and wattle saplings glimpses of the coast come into view. This vista is spoilt by the presence of an abandoned granite quarry and the road which is no longer allowed to be used to transport rock from the site. If workings at the quarry are to continue, all rock must be removed by sea. Although the cost of this operation has temporarily stopped proceedings it is a shame that such an eyesore as a quarry despoils the National Park. After an hour's walk, face-slapping casuarina heralds your arrival at Hazards Beach.



Lemon Rock and Mt Graham from the Hazards. **Left**, *traversing the Hazards.* Stephen Bunton

Hazards Beach, one hour

The coarse sand at the northern end of the beach provides interest as it grades to finer grains. The novelty is soon lost in what seems an interminable plod along the beach only relieved by the myriad interesting items of marine debris, both biological and man-made, washed up on the shore. The entire three kilometre length of the beach is bordered on its inland side by a foredune consisting of ten metre high midden material loosely held together with spinifex in a perpetual struggle with the waves through cycles of erosion and deposition. Almost a third of the way along the beach the Isthmus Track cuts through the dune, exposing the great oyster shells which long ago would have been prised open by little black fingers. At the end of Hazards Beach is the Lagunta Creek campsite which provides shelter from easterly weather under the shadow of Mt Graham.

Lagunta Creek to Cooks Beach, one and a half hours

The track untidily winds its way through fallen trees and regrowth resulting from the intense bushfire which swept the peninsula in 1981. Blackened eucalypts and banksias stand defiant. The track is like that circling Mt Mayson, mostly flat with little ups and downs to cross the creeks draining from inland. The track back to Wineglass Bay by Mt Graham leads off from the northern end of Cooks Beach. Cooks Beach is also interesting for its wealth of flotsam. Behind a rocky outcrop which divides the beach

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in two is the camping area and the hut built by Athol Cook, who grazed sheep in the vicinity last century. There is an interesting geological fault south of Cooks Beach and the different rock type to the west, dolerite, supports vegetation which provided good grazing. This fault is even more pronounced on Schouten Island and effectively divides the island into two vegetation zones—a thorny scrub to the east, and parkland to the west similar to that south of Cooks Beach. Although there are no tracks on Schouten Island it is worth exploring.

Cooks Beach to Bryans Beach, two hours return

The track winds through the tall ti-tree scrub which surrounds the hut before ascending slowly and gently over the rise and down to a lovely beach which looks directly across to Schouten Island. There is a campsite at each end of the beach.

Wineglass Bay

Car-park to Wineglass Bay, one and a half hours

This track gradually rises to cross the saddle between Mt Amos and Mt Mayson. Above the saddle is a track up to some large boulders forming a look-out which offers a spectacular view of Wineglass Bay and the brilliant white sands of Tasmania's most photographed beach. The track descends to the beach where there is a small campsite at the junction of the Isthmus Track, but the more usual campsite is at the far end of the beach. Wineglass Bay derives its name from its shape as viewed from above, the northern and southern headlands being the waist. Between them, these headlands reflect the wave of energy from incoming swells, setting up a standing wave in the treacherous surf and forming the very pronounced cusps which characterize the beach.

A whaling station once graced the southern end of Wingeglass Bay and plans were drawn up for a settlement which did not eventuate. Remnants of buildings can be seen in the bricks lying around the campsite. They should not be used in fireplaces. There is a whale skeleton which decorates the lagoon depending upon the tide and flow conditions, that may bury it in sand. The undesirable element that visit this campsite have littered it with beer bottles and cans, depleted all firewood and hacked trees. The fishermen who moor offshore in this sheltered cove are not without a share in the blame.

The views of Hazards Lagoon with Mt Graham and Mt Freycinet in the background make the Isthmus Track worth considering as a route which completes an interesting circuit, by Hazards Beach, for your return journey to Coles Bay.

Wineglass Bay to Cooks Beach, five hours

The track passes through 'kangaroo tail' grass-trees up on to the open woodland of Quartzite Ridge and then Lone Rock Ridge. The track escapes from the canopy of trees and crosses open grassland scattered with granite tors and occasional stands of banksia. From the wind-swept summit of Mt Graham there are breathtaking views of the coastal heath to the east, Schouten Island, Maria Island and the Ile des Phoques to the south. To the west lies the rest of Tasmania. From here and the summit of neighbouring Mt Freycinet it is possible to see Mt Wellington on a clear day. The track descends steeply from the summit of Mt Graham to East Freycinet Saddle. From the saddle it is possible to climb Mt Freycinet up the open ridge on the north-east.

The track to Cooks Beach descends steeply from the saddle to Botanical Creek, which has permanent water and a small campsite. The track continues to Cooks Beach through the typically undulating lowlands.

The Hazards

Mt Amos, three hours return

From the Mt Amos car-park, the ever-steepening track climbs to the summit by a route which winds between steep granite slabs and ascends those of shallower gradient. During wet weather even these can become frighteningly slippery. A steep narrow gully provides the final pinch, and a short stroll to the summit completes a worthwhile climb.

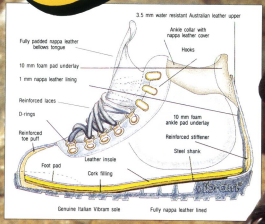
The Hazards Traverse—Sleepy Bay to Mt Amos, five to eight hours

For those who like a little exposed scrambling with their bushwalking, it is possible to do a skyline traverse of the Hazards. It is prudent to carry a 50 metre rope and abseiling equipment to negotiate the summit of the unnamed peak between Mt Parsons and Mt Dove, but it is possible to complete the traverse in either direction without it. W

Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in Wild no 6) is Wild's Contributing Editor for caving. An experienced walker and climber, he has visited many parts of Australia and several overseas countries to pursue these interests.

Freycinet Peninsula

The Bogong



Bunyip Boots

AUSTRALIAN MADE

Walking Boots

Wild Gear Survey

Tom Millar puts the boot in

● DESPITE A REVOLUTION IN BUSHWALKING boot design, boot manufacture is not far removed from the village cobbler. Putting footwear together is incredibly labour intensive, with up to 45 pairs of hands touching a boot before it reaches the shop shelves. Traditional materials, such as leather and rubber, are still very much to the fore, and no-one has designed a 'one size fits all' boot.

Perhaps it's this element of fit which sets boots apart. The results of picking the wrong size or the wrong shape can be catastrophic. Many walkers (including this surveyor) know the misery of blisters, sore feet, toe nails falling off and a host of other gruesome complaints too numerous to mention. Pain can remove all enjoyment from bushwalking, so it is crucial that when purchasing footwear the correct pair for you is chosen.

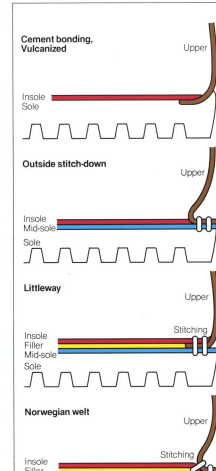
This is not always an easy task, and to confuse the purchaser more, there is an unprecedented number of brands and models on the market at the moment. So how do you choose the correct boot?

This survey is a good starting point. It covers how a boot is made. In the process it discusses materials and design features. There is also tabular information about boots currently generally available. Importantly, it also looks at steps you can take in the shop to help get the correct boot.

A boot or shoe is constructed around a last. A last is a piece of wood, plastic or metal around which the pre-sewn upper is wrapped using heat. The shape of the last therefore dictates the shape of the boot. As most manufacturers use their own lasts, boot shapes differ from manufacturer to manufacturer. Also, a single manufacturer might make a particular model on different lasts. For example, Bunyip makes each model on three lasts; one for the domestic market, a narrower one for export sales to Europe, and a very fat one for the flipper-like feet of the Japanese. Boots imported from Europe are generally XX, their widest last available, but still usually narrower than Australian boots. Within a brand, lasts may vary as well. For example, Rossi makes the Scrub and Hawk on the same last, while the Falcon and Eagle have a different one. A new model, the Harrier, is made on a third.

An attempt was made to classify lasts during the survey, by taking width measurements. However as shapes varied so radically, it was discovered that lasts couldn't really be classified so simplistically. The bottom line is: try them on.

The upper is attached to the sole using one (or a combination) of the principal construction methods. **Cemented.** The upper is folded under the insole and, under pressure, glued directly to the outer sole. Using modern adhesives and executed correctly, the bond should outlast the life of the uppers. Nevertheless, various manufacturers in the past have had problems getting it right. This construction is both light and flexible. **Vulcanized.** Similar in appearance and performance to a cemented sole: the upper and insole are bonded by heat and pressure to the outer sole as it is being formed from molten material. A pre-formed tread might be dropped into the mould prior to injection. This survey reveals that vulcanized soles are losing favour. **Outside stitch-down.** The upper is stitched around the outside on to the mid-sole.



The outer sole is then glued to the mid-sole. **Littleway** (also known as Blake or inside-stitched). The upper is stitched, on the inside, either to an insole, or to both an insole and a mid-sole. If more than one mid-sole is used, then they are sometimes stitched around the edge of the welt. This is called fair-stitching. **Norwegian.** Generally recognized as the heaviest and most expensive to manufacture, these had all but disappeared from this survey, till a flurry of activity revealed a couple of late entries. The boot upper is stitched horizontally to an insole and vertically to the mid-sole, and provides a stiff construction.

These boots are made for walkin' . . . Tom Millar

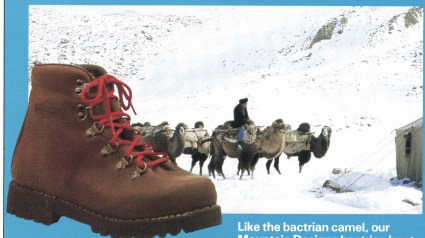
A boot has several important functions to achieve. Firstly, it must give you grip in all sorts of conditions. This is related to the material and pattern of the sole. Generally speaking, softer soles grip better but wear quicker than harder soles. Deeper lugs are heavier but have a longer life. All boots surveyed had soles appropriate to the nature of the boot. The new ultra-light microporous Vibram sole used on the Kathmandu Fuego and the La Robusta 8212 is still relatively new, and it is unclear how well it wears.

One sole worth comment is that used on the Dr Martens 2426. It is pneumatic, with pockets of air sealed into the sole. These cushion the foot. Actually, this sole has been around for years, but it is still popular. The Nike Zealand also has air cushions in the heel of its insole.

As well as giving grip, the sole must protect the foot from rocks, and give it support. This function is related to stiffness, which in turn is determined by the sole and the type of construction. In addition, many boots also incorporate a shank.

A shank is a piece of metal, wood or plastic placed under the arch of the foot between the layers of the sole. It encourages the boot to flex where the foot bends naturally, under the ball, and not under the arch. But some shanks are better than others. • Some boots which supposedly have steel shanks still flex under the arch.

BACTRIAN



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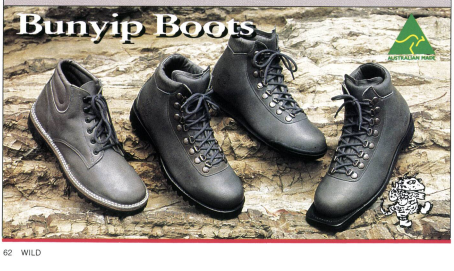
Bogong
Leather-lined, single-piece full-grain leather upper and insole, cement-bonded Vibram mountain sole (compatible with Trionic-style gaiters), D-ring lacing. Pair size 42: 1,280 grams

Grey Mare
Leather-lined, single-piece full-grain leather upper and insole, wire fairstitch construction, Vibram Nordic Norm sole, D-ring lacing. Pair size 42: 1,500 grams



A stiffer boot will give your foot greater protection in rough terrain, but a flexible boot will be more comfortable for easier walking. Stiff boots are mandatory for trans-alpine trips (such as crossing high passes in New Zealand or Nepal), as they take crampons well.

Surprisingly, many of the importers and retailers do not know the details regarding the construction and shanks of the boots they sell. This makes it difficult for customers to make informed decisions.

The foot must be held securely and comfortably to the sole. The upper does this job, as well as protecting the foot from dangers such as ants, leeches, hakea spikes, rocks and water. If your foot is not held securely it will move around inside the boot, causing friction and thus blisters.

Uppers come in two main categories: all leather, and synthetic fabric reinforced with leather. For a hard-wearing, waterproof, bushwalking boot, a single-piece, full-grain leather upper is a stride out in front of anything else. Leather has the advantage of being breathable, yet reasonably waterproof. The waterproofness can be increased with various proofing agents, but this tends to reduce breathability. What I use is good old-fashioned boot polish, with a thin layer of wax waterproofer (such as Snowseal) later. An upper made from a single piece of leather has the advantage of no seams to come apart or leak.

Leather, as it comes off the beast, is usually too thick for boots, so it is split into thinner sheets. The outside sheet is called full grain, while the inner sheet is called split. Suede is the inside of the inner sheet, and reversed leather is full-grain leather with the furry split side out. Split leather is not as strong or water resistant as full grain. Sometimes split leather is coated with polyurethane to improve its appearance and waterproofness. This reduces the leather's natural breathability.

Uppers made from a synthetic fabric reinforced with leather feature strongly at the lighter end of the scale. These boots can perform well for trekking, day-walking or even pack-carrying in easy terrain, but leave something to be desired in rough terrain. Cordura is a very durable expanded nylon used on most of the synthetic upper boots.

Padded tongues help to cushion the foot from firmly tied laces. Gussets help to keep 'nasties' out of your boot.

Gaiters or leggings also stop 'grot' getting into your socks. Perhaps the most protective

gaiter available is the Berghaus Yeti Super-gaiter, which effectively covers the whole boot upper. The Scarpa Trionic sole was specifically designed in conjunction with Berghaus to accommodate the Yeti gaiter. Several other soles are claimed to be compatible with Yetis.

Most boots are lined to some degree. Linings improve comfort, if installed without wrinkles, and hold padding in place. Traditionally, leather has been used for linings, but recently Cambrelle is being used more and more. Despite looking like up-market Scot towelling, it is very durable, absorbent and hygienic, as well as being more economical.

Some of the boots surveyed have a Gore-Tex sock liner laminated to a Cambrelle lining. The use of Gore-Tex in boots has come of age, as the liner now has a single, taped seam. Early Gore-Tex boots were unsuccessful as the liner was perforated by stitches. However, reaction within the outdoors industry is still mixed.

The revolution in boot design, mentioned in the first sentence of this survey, really is the production of comfortable, lightweight and robust boots. The Asolo KSB (now the Horizon) was perhaps the first such boot available in Australia. It used new materials, and a new sole. And it managed to keep its sole attached to the upper. Since then there has been a flood of clones. (This lightweight configuration is now available in leather, even with a Gore-Tex lining.) These boots originated from northern Italy, where there is a long and proud history of boot manufacture. We have also seen Asian (mainly Korean) copies infiltrate the market. These are cheaper but usually of inferior quality. Where does this leave the Australian boot industry?

Our boot industry is protected by a complex system of quotas and duties. This has had a soporific effect on the industry. While the market was crying out for technically advanced, comfortable boots, the Australian boot industry was churning out fairly traditionally constructed basic boots. Walkers don't want their boots to feel like pieces of military hardware, they want them to be comfortable.

A recent bright spot on the local manufacturing scene is Bunyip. Their philosophy is this: Australia is one of the principal exporters of leather in the world; we have a long-established footwear industry; we have cheap labour due to the low dollar; so let's produce a world-class boot. Bunyip has had its fair share of problems, including difficulty in getting the sole to stick, but they seem to have come through them. With a price advantage over the European imports, they are definitely worth trying.

The challenge is there for the other Australian manufacturers. Rossi has released a new model, the Harrier. It will be interesting to see how the market responds.

Now that you have some background knowledge, buying boots should be a little easier. There are two things which you want to achieve: firstly, that the boots are the right type for the walking you do; secondly, that they fit.

You must ask yourself: where will you walk, with what sort of load, and at what time of year? While traverses of the Western Arthurs have been done in Dunlop Volley sandshoes, it is generally accepted that something beefier is required. On the other hand, there is no sense in goose-stepping around Lamington National Park's prepared tracks in a great big pair of clodhoppers.

When in a shop you can tell a boot's intended use by looking at the details already mentioned. Test its stiffness by bending the sole between your two hands. See where the sole flexes. Remember, it should bend under the ball of the foot. Talk to the staff and tell them what you want the boots for. Take into account whether you are prone to sprained ankles.

Now for getting the correct fit. Take your own bushwalking socks with you. You'll probably notice that lighter boots feel more comfortable initially than heavier boots. Don't let that put you off. What you want is a lack of obvious pressure points, and a feeling that your foot is being held comfortably in position. Your heel should not slip up and down, nor should you slip backwards and forwards. Check for length. You need to be able to walk downhill without impacting your toes at the front of the boot. Try tapping your foot vertically, toe first, down on to the floor. What you feel will tell you what you need to know.

Once you are reasonably certain that a boot feels good, leave it on for as long as you can. Walk around the shop. There is no point in buying something you are doubtful about. Also, it is not worth economizing if the cheaper boot doesn't feel good. If you are torn between a boot which feels a little big and one which feels a trifle tight, you are better off with the bigger one. You can always pad it out with an extra sock. (This differs with ski touring boots, which should feel firmer for control.)

While conducting this survey, I noticed distinct differences between shops. Ajay's Snow Country Sports at Heathmont in Melbourne took a particularly thorough line. Staff measure customers' feet with a sizing gauge, which I hadn't seen since being fitted for school shoes. Once this is done, they make a visual assessment, and are then able to recommend particular boots which would fit the customer well. In fact, they are so confident of their fitting, they offer a 'money back–fit guarantee'.

At Paddy Pallin, in Melbourne, there were also encouraging signs. I noticed two seemingly identical boots from different manufacturers on display. Asking the shop assistant why they stocked both, he replied, 'Because if one doesn't fit, then the other is usually right'.

Unfortunately, not all shops are so progressive. I couldn't help but wonder whether something as difficult as matching feet to boots should be left in the hands of untrained shop staff.

Once you've got that perfect pair, break them in gradually, and look after them. Dry them out slowly away from direct heat and nourish the leather. After a few trips, a little sole might have worn away, but they will be enhanced with another type of soul. W

Tom Millar (see Contributors in Wild no 4) lives an 'outdoor' life in north-east Victoria. An experienced bushwalker, cross country skier and mountaineer, he has climbed and skied in New Zealand, Europe and the Himalayas. He had long experience working in specialist outdoor shops before joining Wild's staff, and now works as a cross country ski instructor.

Wild Gear Survey **Bushwalking Boots**

	Use	Weight, kilograms pair size 7/41	Height, centimetres size 7/41	Construction	Shank	Outer (pieces, material)	Lining	Lacing	Tongue	Size range	Approx price
Asolo Italy											
Trek	Light	1.0	13	Littleway, cement bonded	Steel, nylon	Several, Cordura/suede	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, ½ gusset	3–13	$190
Trek-G	Light	1.1	13	As above	As above	As above	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	5–12	$256
Superscout	Light/medium	1.2	15	As above	As above	2, Lowar; 2, suede	Loden	As above	Padded, full gusset	3–13	$167
Rambler	Medium	1.3	16	As above	As above	1, full-grain leather	Cambrelle	Eyelets, hooks	Padded, ½ gusset	3–13	$227
Horizon	Medium	1.3	16	As above	As above	As above	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	5–12	$246
Blundstone Australia											
Leisure	Light	1.2	13	Outside stitch-down	Wood	3, full-grain leather	None	Eyelets	No padding, full gusset	5–12	$77
Hiker	Medium	1.3	13	As above	Wood	As above	None	D-rings, hooks	As above	4–13	$77
Tramper	Medium	1.4	12	Vulcanized	Wood	As above	None	As above	As above	5–12	$64
Bunyip Australia											
Kimberley	Light	1.3	12	Outside stitch-down	Steel	3, full-grain leather	None	Eyelets, hooks	No padding, full gusset	34–48	$130
Bogong	Medium	1.3	14	Cement bonded	Steel	1, full-grain leather	Leather	D-rings	Padded, full gusset	36–48	$195
Flinders	Medium/heavy	1.6	14	Littleway, fair-stitch	Steel	As above	Leather	D-rings	As above	36–48	$220
Caribee Korea											
Bush Walking Boot	Light	0.8	12	Cement bonded	None	Several, nylon/suede	Tricot	Eyelets, D-rings	No padding, ½ gusset	4–12	$50

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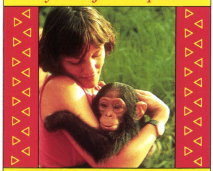

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Wild Gear Survey **Bushwalking Boots**

	Use	Weight, kilograms pair size 7/41	Height, centimetres size 7/41	Construction	Shank	Outer (pieces, material)	Lining	Lacing	Tongue	Size range	Approx price
Dachstein Austria											
Films	Medium	1.4	14	Outside stitch-down	None	1, reversed leather	Suede	Hooks	Padded, full gusset	36–46	$198
Ringo	Medium	1.4	16	Vulcanized	None	Several, leather/suede	Suede	D-rings, hooks	As above	36–46	$198
Sierra	Medium	1.4	15	Cement bonded	None	2, PU-coated split leather; 2, suede	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	36–46	$240
Dolomite Italy											
Montello	Light	1.0	9	Cement bonded	None	1, suede	Suede	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	30–46	$140
Supa L	Light/medium	1.2	15	As above	None	2, PU-coated leather/suede	Cambrelle	As above	As above	36–46	$179
Nepal	Medium	1.3	15	As above	Nylon	Several, Cordura/suede	Cambrelle	As above	As above	36–46	$179
Super Sella	Medium	1.4	14	Littleway, cement bonded	Nylon	1, full-grain leather	Cambrelle	As above	As above	36–46	$199
Pasubio	Medium/heavy	1.4	14	Outside stitch-down	na	1, reverse leather	Suede	As above	Padded, ½ gusset	36–46	$180
Dr Martens UK											
Style 2426	Light/medium	1.3	14	Vulcanized	Steel	Several, Cordura/suede	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	D-rings, hooks	No padding, ⅞ gusset	5–12	$135
Dunlop Korea											
KT Bushwalker	Light	0.7	10	Cement bonded	None	Several, nylon/suede	Nylon	Eyelets, D-rings	No padding, ⅞ gusset	3–12	$54
KT Hika	Light	0.8	14	As above	None	Several, nylon/vinyl	Nylon	As above	Padded, ½ gusset	3–12	$59
Kathmandu Italy											
Fargo	Light	0.9	14	Littleway, cement bonded	None	Several, Cordura/suede	Synthetic terry	D-rings, hooks	Padded, ½ gusset	36–48	$110
Backcountry	Light	1.1	14	As above	na	As above	Suede	As above	As above	36–48	$100
Bambino	Light	na	12	As above	na	As above	Suede	As above	As above	29–35	$80
Montana	Medium	1.4	14	As above	na	2, split leather; 1, suede	Leather	As above	Padded, ½ gusset	36–47	$140
Gore-Tex Trek	Medium	1.5	14	As above	na	1, full-grain leather	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	As above	Padded, full gusset	37–46	$190
Trail	Medium/heavy	1.7	14	Outside stitch-down	na	As above	Leather	As above	As above	36–48	$160
Kingtread Canada											
Badlanders 9″ Boot	Medium	1.6	19	Cement bonded	na	3, full-grain leather	None	Eyelets	No padding, ⅞ gusset	6–11	$149
La Robusta Italy											
8212	Light	0.9	13	Littleway, cement bonded	na	Several, Cordura/suede	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	36–48	$139
8210	Medium	1.5	13	Cement bonded	na	1, full-grain leather	Leather	As above	As above	36–48	$179
Meindl Germany											
Atlas	Medium	1.4	15	Cement bonded	Fibreglass	Several, nylon/leather/suede	Leather	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	3½–12½	$258
Burma	Medium	1.4	15	As above	As above	Several, leather/suede	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	3½–12½	$288
Brenta	Heavy	1.8	16	Norwegian	Steel	1, reversed leather	Leather	As above	As above	3½–13½	$288
Mountain Designs Korea											
Yak	Light/medium	1.2	14	Cement bonded	Steel, nylon	Several, suede	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, ½ gusset	34–47	$139
Thar	Medium	1.3	13	As above	As above	1, full-grain leather	Leather	As above	Padded, ½ gusset	34–47	$179
Bactrian	Heavy	1.7	15	Norwegian	Steel	As above	Leather	As above	Double, padded, full gusset	34–47	$220
Nike Korea											
Zealand	Light	1.0	13	Cement bonded	Steel	Several, Cordura/leather	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, ⅞ gusset	4–12	$169
Rossi Australia											
Scrub	Light	1.2	12	Outside stitch-down	Steel	3, full-grain leather	Linen toe	Eyelets	No padding, ⅞ gusset	3–12	$80
Lady Scrub	Light	1.1	13	As above	Steel	As above	Linen toe	Eyelets	As above	3–7½	$75
Hawk	Light/medium	1.4	13	As above	Steel	As above	Suede heel, linen toe	Eyelets, hooks	Padded, no gusset	3–12	$99
Falcon	Medium	1.6	12	As above	Steel	1, full-grain leather	Suede	Eyelets	Padded, ½ gusset	3–12	$105
Eagle	Medium/heavy	1.6	18	As above	Steel	3, full-grain leather	Suede heel, linen toe	Eyelets, hooks	Padded, full gusset	5–12	$135
Scarpa Italy											
Lady	Medium	1.5	14	Littleway, cement bonded	Nylon sheet	1, full-grain leather	Cambrelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	36–42	$259
Mirage	Medium	1.5	14	As above	As above	As above	Cambrelle	As above	Padded, ½ gusset	37–47	$229
SL	Medium	1.5	14	As above	As above	As above	Cambrelle	As above	Padded, full gusset	37–47	$259
Elite	Medium	1.5	14	As above	As above	As above	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	38–47	$339
Timberland USA											
5″ Lightweight Trail Boot	Light/medium	1.3	11	Vulcanized	Fibreglass	2, Cordura; several, leather	Cambrelle, Gore-Tex	D-rings	Padded, full gusset	4–13	$355
6″ Sport Boot	Medium	1.3	15	As above	As above	3, full-grain leather	Leather	Eyelets	No padding, ½ gusset	4–13	$315
Wild Country Korea											
Leather-Lite	Medium	1.3	12	Norwegian	Nylon	1, full-grain leather	Suede	Eyelets	Padded, overlap	3½–14	$100
Zamberlan Italy											
Sportlite	Medium	1.4	14	Cement bonded	ABS	2, Cordura; 2, suede	Suede	D-rings, hooks	Padded, full gusset	36–47	$198
Trekkite	Medium	1.3	13	As above	ABS	1, full-grain leather	Leather	As above	As above	36–47	$219

na information not available, **1** The nylon is laminated to leather underneath. There is a separate non-continuous Gore-Tex inter-lining beneath the laminated outer.

855 TRAMPER

660 HIKER

643 LEISURE

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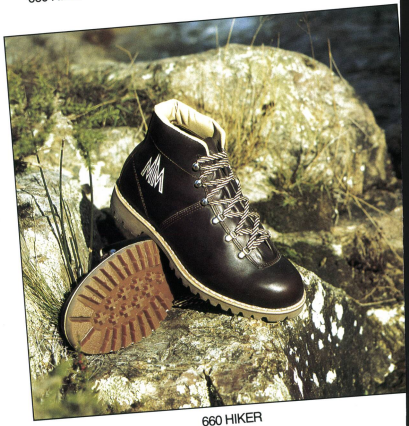


660 HIKER

Australian Alps

A worthy picture book, at last

Range Upon Range. The Australian Alps by Harry Nankin (Algona Publications and Notogaea Press, 1987, RRP $49.95).

The publication of *Range Upon Range* is significant for three reasons. First, it is the first worthy photographic tribute to the magnificence of the Australian Alps. Second, it marks Nankin's coming of age as one of Australia's great wilderness photographers. And third, it shows that Australian book publishing can equal, or exceed, the quality attained anywhere in the world.

Nankin's remarkable colour photos are ably complemented by a brief descriptive text, and poems by David Campbell, Douglas Stewart and Chris Wallace-Crabbe. Some of the photos have appeared before, particularly in Nankin's calendars, but almost every one is superb, and the reproduction outstanding. He has caught the Alps in many moods and lightings, in all seasons, from the Baw Baw Plateau, near Melbourne, to the Brindabella Range, near Canberra. Undoubtedly some areas are over-represented (particularly the Main Range), but there is a sprinkling of inspiring photos of places less-visited by walkers and skiers, such as Mt Wills and Mt Pinnibar, to whet the appetite.

The eloquence of *Range Upon Range* is such that to many who read it the very notion of logging these 'last blue mountains' will be immediately unthinkable.

It's not often a book of this quality is available on *any* subject. If you are interested in the Alps you may not forgive yourself if you miss it.

Chris Baxter

East of the Bluff, looking towards the Crossut Saw on the horizon (just right of the middle), north-east Victoria. Photo by Harry Nankin, reproduced from *Range Upon Range*.

Wilderness: The Original and the Best of Planet Earth education kit by Tracey Diggins (Wilderness Society, 1987, RRP $95 plus 20% sales tax if applicable).

Wilderness is designed for use in teaching an eight-week unit. It includes 90 colour transparencies by Australia's best wilderness photographers, a 30-minute audio commentary and soundtrack, 28 pages of notes on the transparencies, 20 large-format colour prints, and a 72-page teacher guide with student activity sheets.

Two years in the making, the kit was produced with financial assistance from the Myer Foundation, and is of the highest standard. It marks a high point in the Wilderness Society's short but already illustrious history.

In his foreword to *Wilderness*, David Bellamy writes, 'Australia's wilderness areas are part of the world's heritage of hope. Time is short, we must all work together to learn and educate every politican, farmer, business executive, retailer and student before it is too late.'

I can think of no better start than *Wilderness*.

CB

The Tale of Ruby Rose A feature film written and directed by Roger Scholes, 1987.

Recently, several Australian films have featured the landscape as more than mere setting, but almost as a character in itself. *Ruby Rose* does this even more potently than we have seen previously. In *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, the landscape was a threatening enemy. In *Ruby Rose* it is an awesome force, but something that can be understood.

The opening sequence, seen from the eye of an Australian raven looking across the snow-covered peaks of the Cradle Mountain area, establishes a breathtaking sense of place. The Tasmanian Highlands are home to Ruby. Her husband Henry and 'adopted' son Gem trap animals for a living. It is the only life she has known. With her upbringing in wild places, Ruby has a limited knowledge of relationships and even her own past. Having an intense fear to do with the dark and death, she constructs her own basic and superstitious view of the world, complete with elaborate rituals. Her fear grows and she leaves the high country in a personal pilgrimage which enables her to name her fear and return with hope.

Filmed around Tasmania's Central Highlands, the physical environment is at once harsh and yet wildly beautiful. The primitive conditions, when combined with Ruby's superstitions, create an almost mediaeval mood.

Most powerful emotions in the film are conveyed visually, primarily through the landscape. The music, which received the AFI award, reinforces the visual power. Dialogue is sparse, reflecting the characters' inability to articulate a response to the world in the midst of fear and isolation.

The editing lets the film down, failing to create the necessary climaxes to enable involvement in Ruby's struggle. The viewer is left wondering about the significance of some sequences, which indicates that important parts of the narrative have been cut. As a result, the film fails to explore fully the complex issues raised.

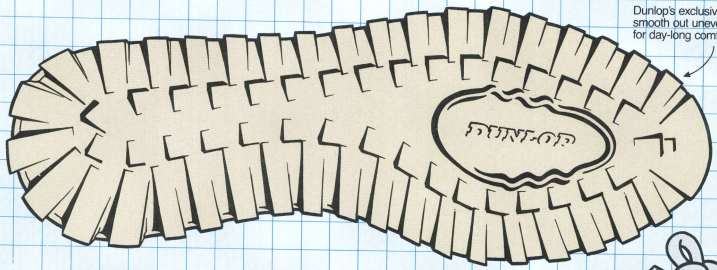
But it is a rewarding film with memorable sequences, ranging from the dramatic encounter with a Tasmanian devil, to the simple warmth of Ruby bathing with her grandmother. *Ruby Rose* has been supported by the Wilderness Society, and wilderness lovers will respond to its respectful celebration of Tasmania's wild places.

Peter Langmead and Brian Walters

Kakadu. A Heritage for the Future by Leo Meier and Simon Balderstone (Weldons, 1987, RRP $39.95).

The work of a natural history photographer of the calibre of Meier, the writing of Australia's outstanding conservation journalist, and the commitment to publishing quality that Weldons has demonstrated is a combination sure to result in an outstanding book. Despite a rather dull cover and an uncharacteristic short-cut in foregoing back endpapers and printing part of the index inside the back cover, *Kakadu* delivers the goods.

As a collection, the photos are very good; as the work of one photographer on a single assignment they are extraordinary. Whilst not every one is a winner, many are, and demonstrate Meier's prowess over a remarkable diversity of subjects.



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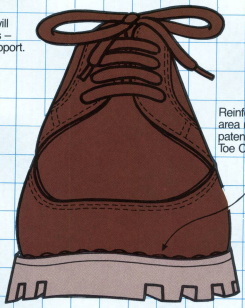

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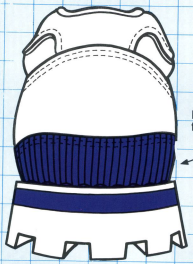

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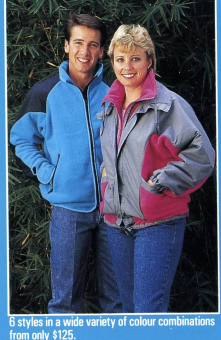

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Reviews

Balderstone's text is well written, detailed and seems well researched—in fact it has rather more substance, in both senses of the word, than we have come to expect from such books, where a little written 'padding' is too often the norm. Balderstone describes the area's origins, history, people, characteristics and significance efficiently but with obvious feeling.

Kakadu is the centre of one of Australia's most important conservation battles. Short of spending some time there, this book is an excellent way of coming to appreciate the enormous significance of this 'heritage for the future'.

CB

Alpine Walking Track, Walhalla to Canberra by John Siseman (Pindari Publications, 1988, RRP $19.95).

Whilst essentially a revision of his earlier book of a similar title (*The Alpine Track: Walhalla to Tom Groggin*), Siseman's latest offering is a far grander and more comprehensive publication. True, the familiar sectionalized route maps are still there (and, as the title implies, extend a good deal further north), but now there is a great deal more besides. Walkers familiar with the Alps, or planning to be, will delight in the excellent colour photos, quaint line drawings and plethora of interesting historical background material. In addition, there is a generous sprinkling of well produced black-and-white photos. The job is well finished by pleasing design and clean printing—probably the best bush guide available in Australia.

CB

Telemark Skiing: Norway's Gift to the World by Halvor Kleppen (Det Norske Samlaget, 1986, RRP $25).

If you regard with suspicion the view that moguls, gates and American derring-do are where cross country downhill skiing is at, and feel that a text on the Telemark turn should at least tell you that the name belongs to a place in Norway, then Halvor Kleppen, author of *Telemark Skiing: Norway's Gift to the World*, is on your side. This book is as parochial and quaint as might be expected from an employee of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation in collaboration with, among others, a major Norwegian ski manufacturer. It is also informative, attractive and infused with a love of the sport whose progress it follows full circle, from the author's home town of Telemark in 1866 to the ski fields and mountains around the world today.

Nicholas Tapp

Ski Mountaineering by Peter Cliff (Unwin Hyman, 1987, RRP $39.95).

I felt a buzz of excitement when I received a review copy of Peter Cliff's book, *Ski Mountaineering*. At last, a complete manual on the growing sport of ski mountaineering! Well, almost complete.

This book is by far the best I have seen devoted to this specialist ski discipline. The sections on glacier skiing, crevasse rescue and avalanche awareness are written in great detail, with excellent photographs and step-by-step illustrations. However, there are some glaring omissions in these instructional chapters. For example, lack of discussion of self-arrest procedures using ski pole tips or purpose-made

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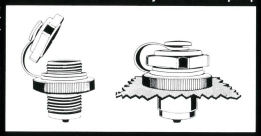

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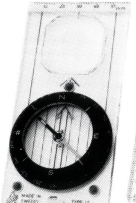

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grips, vital for this type of skiing. The section on equipment and use is far too short and even a little dated.

Having skied in most of the areas detailed in the recommended tours and tour accounts chapters, I was a little surprised to find no mention of opportunities for this skiing activity available in our own Australian Alps, given that such areas as Greenland and the mountains of Morocco receive most detailed coverage.

John Cleare's account of his ski ascent of Mustagh Ata brings back great memories of our own Australian expedition to this peak and was very worthy of inclusion.

Despite the book's shortfalls, *Ski Mountaineering* is a title any self-respecting ski-alpinist should have on his or her bookshelf.

Glen Nash

Mountaincraft, Mountain Safety Manual 20 by Lindsay Main (New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, revised edition 1987, RRP $NZ19.15 including postage, from NZMSC, c/- Department of Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand).

First published in 1971, this classic reference was last revised in 1980 and was well overdue for such treatment. In only 200 pages Main covers everything from coiling a rope to mountain first aid. It is therefore not surprising that the treatment of many subjects is barely adequate. For example, the use of Friends is given only the briefest coverage. In many instances *Mountaincraft* serves as only an introduction to more detailed references. However, the sections dealing with the peculiarities of New Zealand mountaineering, particularly those on mountain weather, river crossing, and the mountains of New Zealand, are likely to be of value to Australians contemplating a first visit to highest New Zealand.

CB

A Guide to the Three Sisters–Katoomba by Roger Collison (Hall and Collison Books, 1987, RRP $5.95).

Rockclimbs Around Adelaide edited by Nyrie Dodd (Adelaide University Mountain Club, 1986, RRP $12.50 including postage, from GPO Box 498, Adelaide, SA 5001).

The Mount Cook Guide by Hugh Logan (New Zealand Alpine Club, second edition 1987, RRP $NZ26.90 including postage, from PO Box 1700, Christchurch 8000, New Zealand).

An unusually neat publication with full-colour cover photos (albeit of the same subject), *The Three Sisters* includes all the climbs on this famous Blue Mountains, New South Wales, landmark as well as on nearby Malaita Wall and Echo Point—a total of just over 30 climbs! The last guidebook to the area was published in 1972. The esoteric little new guide will be welcomed by local climbers and others interested in the origins of Australian rockclimbing.

Containing compact descriptions of some 700 climbs in the Adelaide region, Dodd's handy little publication should keep the locals quiet for years to come even if it is unlikely to win production awards.

A revised and updated version of the 1982 guide (see review in *Wild* no 9), the 1987 edition has reinforced *The Mount Cook Guide*'s position as the Bible of anyone wanting to climb among New Zealand's greatest peaks. The photo-

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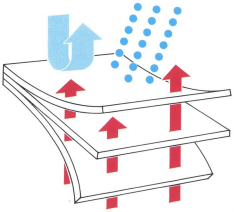

pores. These pores are randomly offset to stop rushing winds and too small to allow liquid water to penetrate, but large enough to allow

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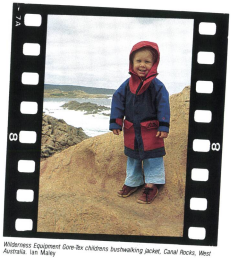

Wilderness Equipment Gore-Tex childress bushwalking jacket, Canal Rocks, West Australia. Ian Malley

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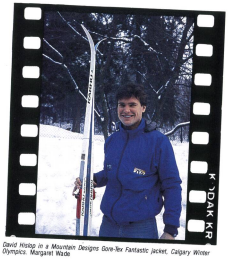

David Hislop in a Mountain Designs Gore-Tex Fantastic jacket, Calgary Winter Olympics. Margaret Wade

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Kim and Meg Carrigan wearing Kathmandu Gore-Tex anoraks, Switzerland. Mike Perry

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diagrams are generally clear and helpful. All the old classics are included as well as the modern horror-shows on the South Face of Mt Cook, Mt Hicks and elsewhere.

CB

Reader's Digest National Parks of Victoria, South Australia & Tasmania (Reader's Digest, 1987, RRP $21.95).

Similar in format and including material first published in Reader's Digest's *Wild Australia* (1984—see review in *Wild* no 19), this large-format paperback is designed as a 'travel guide'. After some introductory chapters there are photos (which are mostly very good) and very brief descriptions of selected National Parks. Other information, also brief, is included in sections describing park facilities, wildlife and so on.

The publisher still seems to be having trouble getting photo captions correct—a photo of Mackeys Peak in the Wonderland Range of the Grampians is described as being in the Serra Range.

This book, and its three companion volumes covering the rest of Australia, is a revision and expansion of *Wild Australia*. If you have the 1984 book you are not likely to want this one as well. If you don't have the 1984 book it would still seem the better buy if you can get it.

CB

Hypothermia, Frostbite and Other Cold Injuries edited by James Wilkerson (The Mountaineers, 1986, RRP $12).

This is a companion volume to the indispensable *Medicine for Mountaineering* and *Mountaineering First Aid*, also published by The Mountaineers. Its content and compact and rugged binding make it valuable for expeditions.

Prevention, recognition and pre-hospital treatment are covered in detail. Surprisingly, frostbite occupies only a dozen of the 100 pages. Lack of discussion of modern surgical responses, especially the recommended recovery period before surgical intervention (up to eight months according to one Russian authority) might be felt to be a serious omission when one is faced with an eager, scalpel-wielding surgeon without frostbite experience.

Michael Collie

Waxing and Care of Cross-Country Skis by Michael Brady (Wilderness Press, 1986, RRP $5.50).

This is the best introduction to the science&art of waxing I have seen. While the author possibly underestimates the relevance of skating for tourers, he does manage to bring common sense, rules of thumb and a simple overview to a subject once the preserve of alchemists and witch-doctors.

MC

A Dream of White Horses: Recollections of a Life on the Rocks by Edwin Drummond (Diadem, 1987).

Ed Drummond, then known as Ed Ward-Drummond, gained notoriety among his fellow British climbers in the 1960s and early 1970s for the controversial style in which he established, and publicized, his daring new climbs. Emigrating to the USA, he crossed swords with the American climbing establishment, acquired a succession of wives, and took up climbing public buildings—all with

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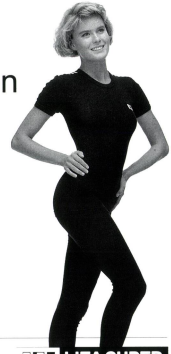

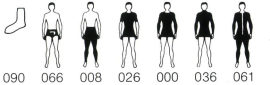

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the highest possible profile. Along the way he started writing. *A Dream of White Horses* (the name is derived from a famous Welsh climb of the same name pioneered by Drummond) is an autobiographical collection of Drummond's essays and poems. There is probably no more original and better written book of climbing writing. Whilst parts are redolent of esoteric references and undoubtedly self-indulgent, the best, such as an account of a failed solo attempt on Yosemite Valley's North America Wall, exhibits staggering candour and insight. And for sheer word-power and strength of argument, his review of *Meritoe* by Jim Perrin (see review in *Wild* no 21) is possibly without peer in contemporary mountain literature.

CB

The Landing by Katherine Scholes (Hill of Content, 1987, RRP $14.95).

If you enjoyed Katherine Scholes's first book for children, *The Boy and the Whale*, you will undoubtedly be just as enthralled by her latest children's tale written on a similar theme.

A young girl, Annie, and her grandfather are involved in a large-scale rescue of a flock of Tasmanian mutton-birds battered and exhausted by a wild sea storm. Scholes cleverly combines fantasy with reality when Annie enters the world of birds and actually communicates with them.

The story switches from the scene in Grandfather's boat-yard, where rescue takes place, to the battle at sea of a large white albatross as he is buffeted by the storm, climaxing in his dramatic landing in the boat-shed.

Four full-page colour pastel drawings and a number of pen-and-ink drawings, by illustrator David Wong, supplement the images created by Scholes. The author's notes provide interesting background information which aid in the understanding of the sea birds and explain the derivation of the maritime stories included in the text.

The fascinating story will intrigue all animal-loving children of the 8–12 age group who empathize with animals in distress.

Sue Baxter

Other Titles Received

A Climbers Guide to Poon Hill (Round Hill-Newman, Western Australia) by Dave Wagland (Published by the author, second edition 1987).

Abode of Snow by Kenneth Mason (Diadem and The Mountaineers, reprint 1987).

Alan Rouse: A Mountaineer's Life compiled by Geoff Birtles (Unwin Hyman, 1987, RRP $39.95).

Australia: The Unique Continent by Jocelyn Burt (Dent, 1987, RRP $29.95).

Insight Guides–Australia by Phil Jarratt (APA Productions, third edition 1987).

Insight Guides–New Zealand by Gordon McLauchlan and Max Lawrence (APA Productions, third edition 1987).

Lonely Planet Update 24 (Lonely Planet, 1987, RRP $4.95).

South Light: A Journey to Antarctica by Michael Parfit (Bloomsbury, 1987, RRP $39.95).

The Walker 1988 (Melbourne Walking Club, RRP $3.60).

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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A *Wild* survey to keep your gear dry

● **Hydrophobia.** To some extent, enjoying wet environments inevitably involves adjusting your expectations of comfort and taking appropriate precautions (see *Wild* no 21, page 25). A wet sleeping bag can be an inhibiting prospect. Virtual impunity from the effects of dampness can, however, be liberating. Without the worry of keeping your sleeping bag, clothing, food, and camera dry, the challenges of river adventures can be wholeheartedly embraced and freely enjoyed.

Most packs are not even water resistant and certainly aren't designed to be immersed. Packing the contents in several knotted garbage bags or lining your pack with a heavy polythene bag offers adequate protection from rain and brief immersion. Yes, Virginia, packs do float.

Screw-top plastic barrels, while practical in rafts and open canoes, are cumbersome to carry. (People have been known to tow them behind Li-Los.)

Made to fit inside kayaks, canoeists' dry-bags are an obvious solution for complete peace of mind. These dry-bags are available in several shapes and sizes (many make perfect sleeping bag stuff-sacks or pack liners) and seal by twisting and/or folding their throats. We have trusted our cameras to a few of the bags surveyed with no regrets so far. None is guaranteed or intended for submersion or for protecting equipment that can be permanently damaged by water. Buy a specialized waterproof housing for your camera.

The *D B Stuff* and *Wild Water* bags seal simply by twisting and folding the throat and fastening with a shock-cord loop or cord respectively. The flattened throats of the *Cascade Designs*, *Eddyline*, and *Ortlieb* bags are folded repeatedly around a stiffened hem and secured with buckles. Some throats are easier to align than others. One side of the *Cascade Designs* throat tucks under a flap before folding. Like a Coghlans refillable squeeze tube, the throat of the *Voyageur Closure Bag* is sealed with a slit tube containing a rod. The folded throat is stretched around the rod and pinched by the tube.

Ortlieb bags have unusually neat and discrete welds, while the Cascade Designs welds are crude but broader. Check that the fabric is sufficiently rugged for your requirements. Heavier material is less pliable and may be more difficult to seal but is more durable. Carefully inspect the welding or stitching and seam-sealing. The *Cascade Designs Boundary Bags* have shoulder straps. *Cascade Designs See Bags* are translucent.

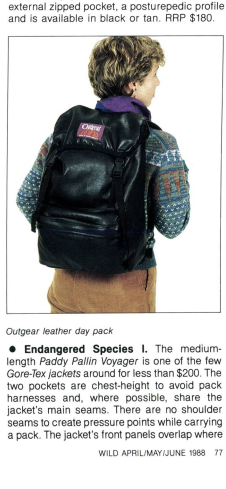
Rucksack waist- and chest-straps should be undone when wading, Li-Loing or swimming so that the pack can be jettisoned quickly in an emergency.

Dimensions given in the table are manufacturers' estimates and should be regarded as a rough guide only.

● **Hot Under the Collar.** *High and Dry* polypropylene stretch *underwear* from *Fairydown* comes in three weights (light, winter and expedition), six sizes (S-XXL) and a variety of colours (including complementary pin stripes). Prices start at about $32 a piece. Crew-neck tops have long or short sleeves, turtle-neck tops have neck zips and long sleeves.

Drytech Bodywear is the foundation of *Paddy Pallin's* new range of integrated *clothing*. The compatibility of garments commonly layered, or used together, has been enhanced by paying attention to the alignment of seams, shape of collars, sleeve lengths and the relative moisture-bearing properties of the fabrics used. The brushed Drytech (polyester) fabric has a densely knit outer surface and an open knit near the skin. Polyester fibres absorb little moisture or body oil and tolerate hot washing and drying. Drytech bodywear is loose fitting when worn alone and is available in five sizes (XS-XL) and a variety of colours including amber, blue and light grey. The *Paddy Pallin Techtop* (145 grams, RRP $49.80) has a double-layer shawl collar and elasticized cuffs. Back and shoulder seams have been eliminated out of consideration for pack carriers. *Techpants* (125 grams, RRP $49.80) have elasticized waist and cuffs.

● **For the Walker Who Has Everything.** At last, a day pack to match your lounge suite! *Outgear's all-leather day pack* is expected to outlive its original owner. (Whether this is because of the pack's longevity or the impact of the price is unclear!) Similar to the Outgear Yandee day pack, it is top-opening, has an external zipped pocket, a posturepedic profile and is available in black or tan. RRP $180.



Outgear leather day pack

● **Endangered Species I.** The medium-length *Paddy Pallin Voyager* is one of the few *Gore-Tex jackets* around for less than $200. The two pockets are chest-height to avoid pack harnesses and, where possible, share the jacket's main seams. There are no shoulder seams to create pressure points while carrying a pack. The jacket's front panels overlap where

Pack Liners and Dry Bags

	Material; closure	Claimed size, depth x diameter, centimetres (litres)	Approx price
Assorted Brands			
Pack liners	Welded polythene	About 100 x 45	$3
	Sewn and seam-sealed coated nylon	As above	$19
Cascade Designs USA			
Boundary Bag			
Extra large	Welded nylon-reinforced PVC; fold and buckle	81 x 41 x 33 (110)	$97
Large	As above	64 x 38 x 25 (62)	$87
Baja Bags			
Extra large	As above	76 x 27 (62)	$47
Large	As above	71 x 23 (36)	$37
Medium	As above	56 x 20 (24)	$32
Small	As above	36 x 14 (6)	$22
See Sac			
Medium	As above	56 x 20 (24)	$26
Small	As above	36 x 14 (6)	$20
Extra small	As above	27 x 14 (4.5)	$18
Superior Sac			
Medium	Welded lightweight nylon-reinforced PVC; fold and buckle	56 x 20 (24)	$25
Small	As above	33 x 14 (5.6)	$20
D B Stuff Australia			
Canyon Bag			
Large	Welded nylon-reinforced PVC; twist, fold and elastic tie	130 x 38	$24
Medium	As above	80 x 29	$20
Small	As above	70 x 22	$16
Eddyline Australia			
Float Sac			
Weekender	Sewn and seam-sealed coated nylon; fold and buckle	130 x 35 (100)	$45
Overnight	As above	120 x 29 (75)	$40
Picnic	As above	97.5 x 20 (30)	$35
Playlunch	As above	65.5 x 20 (15)	$27
Voyageur Australia			
Closure Bag	Welded polythene with protective sleeve; fold and clamp	90 x 27	$29
Ortlieb West Germany			
Dry Duffle Bag			
Large	Welded nylon-reinforced PVC; fold and buckle	100 x 31	$48
Medium	As above	82 x 26	$43
Small	As above	75 x 22	$38
Extra small	As above	65 x 19	$35
Wild Water United Kingdom			
Eaubag			
Large	Sewn and seam-sealed coated nylon; twist, fold and tie (two throats)	82 x 24	$40
Medium	As above	58 x 15	$33
Small	As above	42 x 13	$29

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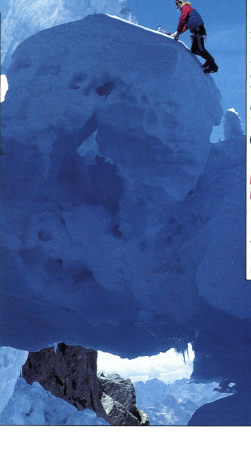

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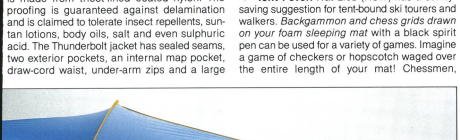
they meet, completely covering the zip twice. The Voyager has a peaked hood, touch-tape cuff closures and is available in five sizes. The medium size weighs 530 grams. $189 at Paddy Pallin shops.

● ***Thortful.*** The *Bushgear Thunderbolt jacket* is made from tricot-lined coated nylon. The proofing is guaranteed against delamination and is claimed to tolerate insect repellents, suntan lotions, body oils, salt and even sulphuric acid. The Thunderbolt jacket has sealed seams, two exterior pockets, an internal map pocket, draw-cord waist, under-arm zips and a large hood. The Thunderbolt is available in either 210 denier Oxford nylon ($169) or 70 denier taffeta nylon ($159) at Mountain Designs shops.



Chouinard Comet bivouac shelter

● **Purple Plum.** The *Chouinard 4000* lightweight *internal frame pack* has a unique pleated lid that expands, armadillo-like, to enlarge the lid compartment. Corresponding external and internal zips in the lid compartment allow you to reach through the lid into the main compartment and internal pockets. A large internal pocket next to the frame enables soft, yielding garments to be positioned next to your spine. The 4000 has a double base, taped seams, 65 litre capacity, weighs only 1.45 kilograms, and is available in two fixed back-lengths. $229 at Paddy Pallin shops.

● **Quadrapod.** Familiar tent designs continue to reappear on shop floors (see *Wild* no 26, page 79). The *Bushgear Quadrant* (another Wild Country Quasar clone) is a two-person, four-season free-standing elongated *dome tent*. The polyurethane-coated nylon fly and floor (210 x 122 centimetres) have sealed seams. The Quadrant is available with either eight millimetre diameter aluminium ($449) or nine and a half millimetre fibreglass poles ($339) from Mountain Designs shops.

● **Comet.** The rapid-pitching, single-skin *Chouinard Comet* offers three-season *shelter* for two people yet weighs only 1.27 kilograms. The baggy tub-floor hangs from a conical canopy which is stretched between two tie-off points over a single aluminium hoop. The door zip follows the hoop arch and is protected by an abbreviated vestibule. When opened at the tent's highest point, the door, together with a low rear vent, exploits natural thermal air movement to expel moisture. The manufacturer is sufficiently confident of the durability of the elastomeric fabric proofing to put it on the outside of the canopy where it protects the nylon from ultraviolet rays. The exposed woven texture of the canopy's interior surface helps to spread and dissipate condensation. About $500 at Paddy Pallin shops.

● **Tent Fever.** Nat Lieb (NSW) has a sanity-saving suggestion for tent-bound ski tourers and walkers. *Backgammon and chess grids drawn on your foam sleeping mat* with a black spirit pen can be used for a variety of games. Imagine a game of checkers or hopscotch waged over the entire length of your mat! Chessmen, checkers, and draughts or backgammon counters can be improvised from double-sided buttons or tokens pirated from children's games. Six double-sided tokens can be tossed instead of a dice (that gives a one-in-sixty-four chance of throwing a six!).

● **Endangered Species II.** Looking for a *cross country downhill boot* for under $200? The *Alico Mountain Ski* has a single-piece full-grain leather, Cambrelle-lined upper with a heel cup and bellows tongue, a nylon shank, Norwegian welt and a Vibram Nordic Norm sole. A pair of size 42 boots weighs two kilograms. RRP $191.

Other ski boots imported by *D B Biggs* include the high-cut, double-tongue *Alico Super Telemark* (2.4 kilograms, RRP $235), and the *Dinsport Eskimo* which has a leather-lined, split-leather upper with a bellows tongue and nylon cuff cemented to a Skywalk Nordic Norm sole (1.1 kilograms, RRP $140).

● **Skiing Without Snow.** Roller skiing offers the best off-snow cross country ski training simulation. With dramatic climatic changes predicted, perhaps roller skiing will supersede the real thing! Three *SwedSki roller skis* are imported by *D B Biggs*. Reverse rolling resistance can be adjusted to simulate gripping ski bases for diagonal striding and non-gripping bases for skating. SwedSki roller skis accommodate most types of bindings.

The *Popular* model weighs 2.6 kilograms a pair and costs RRP $275.

The *Laser's* reverse brake can be disengaged for skating (1.9 kilograms, RRP $360).

The axles of the *Ultra 3000* model are supported from one side only and canted so that the ski can be radically *edged* while skating (1.7 kilograms, RRP $375).

● **Endangered Species III.** The *Faders Ifach Light D* (45 grams) is one of the few remaining lightweight *karabiners* on the market under $10. The *Faders screw-gate karabiner* weighs 85 grams and costs about $16. The unusually compact *Faders Microlite figure-of-eight* descender is curved along its long axis. Inserting the rope from either side gives two rates of descent. 85 grams. RRP $18.

The new *Cassin Antares* 50 centimetre *ice tools* weigh 850 grams and have interchangeable reverse droop or traditionally curved picks, and adze or hammer. RRP $175.

Outdoor Survival also offers an Australian-made *rockclimbing harness*. Independent waist-belt and leg loops are available in four sizes and together weigh 550 grams (small). RRP $75.

● **Arise, Sir Jammerlot.** *Chouinard Camalots* are the first *spring-loaded camming devices* to depart significantly from the typical cluster of cams rotating around a single axis. A Camalot's dual axles each bear a pair of cams (not a promising configuration for very thin cracks). Each Camalot adjusts to a greater range of crack widths than comparable single-axle camming devices. This additional versatility is useful when tackling long, regular cracks, because more placements will be possible from a given selection of units, but is otherwise of marginal value. Because both axles support the open cams, a Camalot has the strength to be used as a passive nut. Flexible stainless-steel cable handles reduce the risk of breaking a stem over a horizontal edge. Camalots come in four sizes with overlapping ranges, fitting cracks from 28–48, 38–70, 54–92, and 72–127 millimetres, and weighing 125, 165, 241 and 369 grams respectively. The average cost is about $80.

Chouinard Camalot

● **Stinging the Europeans.** With its new *rockclimbing friction boot, the Scorpion, Verglas* has come up with a locally-designed product to rival those of the major European manufacturers, at a much lower price.

If a would-be friction boot manufacturer can't come up with rubber offering outstanding friction they should proceed no further. The Scorpion passes this first, crucial, test with flying (perhaps not the right word!) colours. Its rubber at least equals, if not surpasses, the frictional qualities of the renowned Spanish rubber used in Fires. This means, however, that the rubber is soft and will wear more quickly—the unavoidable trade-off. Another important requirement, at least in most Australian

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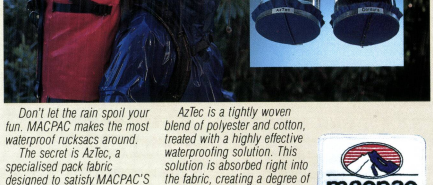

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situations, is that the boot flex generously along (but not across) its length, for smearing. Scorpions pass this test well.

Two minor criticisms come to mind: I would prefer a boot with a thinner sole for better 'feel', and I experienced slight discomfort around my heels in what seemed to be otherwise correctly-fitted boots. However, whilst unable to personally demonstrate it(!), I see no reason why these boots will not appear on the hardest climbs—the ultimate test of any boots.

Manufactured in Korea, Scorpions appear to be at least as well made as the European boots and are more padded than most, particularly inside the tongue. Constructed in suede and nylon, in two shades of red, with bright yellow stretch laces, they are likely to appeal to the exhibitionist in many climbers. At an RRP of $139 at Mountain Designs shops (cheaper as a special introductory offer) they will also appeal to the Scrooge in them all.

Chris Baxter

- **Citizen of the World.** The *MSR Internationale stove*, a *multifuel* version of the Whisperlite, has been released by the importer, *D B Biggs*. As with the MSR Multifuel XGK, a separate jet must be installed to burn kerosene. The stove and pump come with field-maintenace and jet-cleaning tools and a kerosene jet. The Internationale weighs 350 grams (without tank). RRP $115.

  A pair of nesting *MSR stainless steel billies*, together with lid and grippers, is available for about RRP $67.

- **Screwed.** Before you buy a *Sigg aluminium fuel bottle* for your *MSR stove*, check that the thread in the bottle neck and on your plastic stove pump are compatible. New Sigg bottles appear to have a different thread which has resulted in a few stripped pump threads and tearful MSR owners. *MSR* 600 millilitre *fuel bottles* are unsuitable for beverages and cost about $20.

- **Under the Yum-Yum Tree.** For years Australian bushwalkers and other rucksack carriers have had to rely on overseas manufacturers for *lightweight dried meals*. All that has changed with the appearance of *Giant Trees* food in the shops in recent months. The 'menu' includes good variety: two beef, two chicken, two vegetarian and one lamb meal. (We found the Chicken Casserole unusually imaginative for a dried meal, but Beef Goulash seemed a bit bland and low on beef.) In addition, there are three Soy Feast meatless 'convenience foods'. If you are planning to take dried food on your next trip Giant Trees food adds welcome variety to the choices available—RRP $4.95 each ($2.95 for the Soy Feast meals).

- **Performing Seals.** *Fabra-seal* is a liquid *water-repellent* agent for fabrics. Four hundred grams in a fluorocarbon-free spray can costs about $10. Also from *D B Biggs*, *Letha-seal*, a teflon- rather than silicon-based cream, *rejuvenates leather*. One hundred millilitres in a tube costs about $6.

New products (on loan to *Wild*), and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcomed for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices, and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send items to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Photo: Rod Turner NSW

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Wildfire

Angry readers open fire on 'Rats!'

I suppose the odd blemish inevitably slips into any publication, but the garbage masquerading under the title of 'Rats!' which appeared in the summer edition of your magazine (*Wild* no 27) is nigh inexcusable.

The attitudes of author Sesterka to wildlife and the natural environment are contemptible at best, and the needless stupidity of killing his terrifying (tiny) assailant is self-evident. The fact that you have allowed him to make a quid out of the exercise is just as bad.

As author of a great deal of moralistic prose—some of which makes sense, I might add—you do yourself little credit by allowing drivel like 'Rats!' to go to press. And in a specialist journal such as *Wild*, which prides itself in aiming at a particular, somewhat restricted audience, I won't buy arguments about freedom of expression either.

I trust that any future articles similar to 'Rats!' which appear to revel in needless killing will receive the firm ego-deflating editorial 'No thanks' that they deserve.

Jon Luly
Lyneham, ACT

A magazine that has to print a story of a ski tourer killing a rat for humour is sick, sick, sick and I don't want to read that magazine.

Rachel Brown
Launceston, Tas

Ms Brown's principles apparently did not extend to paying postage on her letter—she charged it to Wild. Editor.

Like It Or Not

I'd like to disagree with some of the criticism (Wildfire, *Wild* no 27) of Chapman's article on Tasmanian walks. True, there is more detail than in the usual walk report, but most of that information had been printed previously in bushwalking magazines, just as his route guide *South West Tasmania* rehashed the Hobart Walking Club's notes which had been around for many years. People who really want to find their own route don't need to know of earlier visits, of course, but for most a visit to a special area is enhanced by hearing or reading of other attempts.

However, I am uneasy about commercial gain from detailed track notes for wilderness areas. There is a demand for them, but is there really a need? Perhaps if people had to do their own research, fewer would go.

Increased usage does damage an area, and publicity encourages usage. But unspoilt areas will be visited more often irrespective of publicity because they *are* the last such areas. The only effective control is their remoteness and the difficulties they present, and technology is diminishing that control whether we like it or not.

Vince Murtagh
West Killara, NSW

Idiosyncrasy

I would like to comment on a few of the points made in Jim Smith's letter in *Wild* no 27. If Smith does not like possible adverse comment on his publications then he should not submit them for review in a magazine such as *Wild*. Looking back over my review of his and Neil Paton's books of walks in the Blue Mountains, I find little of substance in Smith's comments. Both books cost the same so I tried to highlight some of the differences. I did mention that the Smith book contains more walks. The differences in the bindings and maps are only minor, as people will find if they inspect copies of each book. I still feel that the Smith book should have mentioned ways to Blue Gum Forest with, if necessary, suitable warnings.

What I describe as Smith's 'idiosyncratic' views on conservation are to be found in his small book *What Is Happening to the Blue Mountains* (Second Back Row Press, 1981). I refer readers to Peter Prineas's review of it in the NSW *National Parks Journal* of October 1981. Smith believed at the time that 'wilderness addicts' dominated the conservation movement. They turned attention away from the needs of small urban reserves in favour of pure wilderness areas. He devoted a page of this book to a 'conspiracy hypothesis' where he alleged that 'the wilderness lobby was promised that they could have their Colo wilderness and National Park extensions if they didn't create fuss over the disappearance of urban bushland'. I will leave it to the readers of *Wild* to make what they will of this . . . unsubstantiated claim. Perhaps his views are not so idiosyncratic if you realize that many of the areas that concern Smith are very close to his own backyard at Wentworth Falls, and that the Colo is a bit further away. As Prineas points out in his review, one of the reasons for degradation of small reserves in the Blue Mountains is because of the pressure of too many people (such as Smith) living there.

One is left to speculate that the reason that Blue Gum Forest is missing from his walks book is because it was saved by the action of bushwalkers. The forest was purchased by the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs after a public appeal during the Depression to prevent it being logged. The federation is one of the groups of 'wilderness addicts' that dominated the conservation movement in the early 1980s. Smith also makes unsubstantiated claims about the federation's activities in his book on the Six Foot Track, as mentioned in my review in *Wild* no 16.

David Noble
Leichhardt, NSW

Blue, Blue Mountains

It's taken seven years for an article on Blue Mountains climbing to appear in *Wild* and, to say the least, it was disappointing. Surely a written representation of any area should inform its readers of what has happened in the last seven years?

This recent era of history has been both colourful and important, involving not only re-assessment of older areas, but the development of whole new cliffs. Classic, hard routes now reside on aesthetic walls and aretes at Centennial Glen, Shipley Lower, Walls Ledge, Sunset Rock, Porters Pass, Mitchells Ridge, Tarana, the Coal Mines Cliff, and Corroboree Walls, to name a few. These areas are what Blue Mountains climbing is today and part of what it will be in the future! Surely that's of some significance?

Also, Cosmic County is obviously a bit more than 'not a bad place', being the best all-round cliff in the Blue Mountains, and is more typical than Mt Piddington of what the area has to offer. . .fingery, bolt-protected walls. . .

Michael Stacey
Katoomba, NSW

An article on recent Blue Mountains rockclimbing developments will appear in a future issue of Wild. *The article in* Wild *no 27 was intended to be an introduction to the subject.* Editor.

I refer primarily to the article in *Wild* no 27 by Tom Williams—a brief history of Blue Mountains rockclimbing—in which he refers to Eric Dark as being the 'commander' of the 'Katoomba Suicide Club'. Recently this was also mentioned in a rockclimbing guide to the Three Sisters.

I knew Dr Dark for many years and used to talk to him at length about his climbing and other outdoor exploits which ranged from about 1905 to the 1940s. . .he was always emphatic that the group of climbers that he founded in 1929 with his wife Eleanor, Osmar White, Eric Lowe and others was called the 'Blue Mountaineers'. In fact, to call a group a 'Suicide Club' was completely foreign in his way of thinking, even in jest.

The group was only called a 'Suicide Club' by outsiders in a half-jocular, half-disparaging manner. According to the well-known Australian author, Osmar White, Dr Dark was possibly the first to introduce roped climbing techniques to Australia, a fact of which Dr Dark was very proud.

The original misunderstanding arose many years ago from Bryden Allen's work for the Sydney Rockclimbing Club, *The Rock-Climbs of NSW*, and unfortunately subsequent writers quoted this source, although sometimes without acknowledgement, and the misunderstanding has continued. . .

Warwick Williams
East Lindfield, NSW

In It, Again

Wild's philosophy of upholding our wilderness areas and the related outdoor activities goes hand in hand with a strong conservation ethic. With this in mind, I was 'interested' to read the Sydney Water Board's advertisement in *Wild* no 27. 'The ocean's a big place' mentality behind this proposed solution to Sydney's sewerage effluent problems is hardly sympathetic to conservation ideals. It is surprising that other cities haven't followed the lead of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works, and established sewerage farms like Werribee, or developed other acceptable methods of waste treatment. It is hardly fair to expect the nearest marine ecosystem to bear the brunt of the treatment process.

John McPhee
Ayr, Qld

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

CYCLOPS, going from strength to strength

For over a decade one outstanding rucsac system - Cyclops - was acclaimed by mountaineers world-wide as the epitome of strength, reliability and stability.
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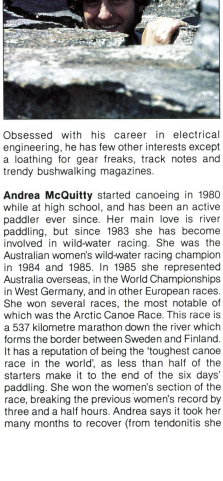
Contributors

Ian Brown has been bushwalking, climbing, skiing and paddling for about 16 years and manages to get away every two or three years on an extended wilderness trip somewhere. He believes wilderness travelling has a lot to say about the lifestyle to which our species is physically and mentally adapted. His other loves are photography and his wife and young son, and he works in National Park management. He recently completed an eight-week walk on Queensland's Cape York Peninsula, and is co-preparing a poetry/photo book on the Blue Mountains.

Nipper Leaf is the pen-name used by Ian Wilson, a member of Sydney University Bushwalkers. After emerging from a swamp in the northern Blue Mountains, he found that bushwalking suited him as an activity and combines this with canyoning and ski touring.



Obsessed with his career in electrical engineering, he has few other interests except a loathing for gear freaks, track notes and trendy bushwalking magazines.

Andrea McQuitty started canoeing in 1980 while at high school, and has been an active paddler ever since. Her main love is river paddling, but since 1983 she has become involved in wild-water racing. She was the Australian women's wild-water racing champion in 1984 and 1985. In 1985 she represented Australia overseas, in the World Championships in West Germany, and in other European races. She won several races, the most notable of which was the Arctic Canoe Race. This race is a 537 kilometre marathon down the river which forms the border between Sweden and Finland. It has a reputation of being the 'toughest canoe race in the world', as less than half of the starters make it to the end of the six days' paddling. She won the women's section of the race, breaking the previous women's record by three and a half hours. Andrea says it took her many months to recover (from tendonitis she developed in the race).

She also does some bushwalking, but only when there is no water in the rivers.

Tim O'Loughlin is a well known Tasmanian conservationist, having been Co-Director of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust for a number of years and a past campaigner for the Wilderness Society. He currently is employed by the Tasmanian Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife as a Wilderness Education Project Officer, running the current minimal impact bushwalking campaign. He is an avid bushwalker, canoeist and lover of boggy tracks (a necessity in Tasmania).

Barry Slade is a freelance photographer, with a strong interest in the natural world. This interest began as a child, at first through books and television (he lived in the inner city) and later while living at Kurnell, with its forests, cliffs and wetlands. In latter years nature photography has been a large part of his photography.

He is concerned at the on-going destruction of Australia's habitats for short-sighted commercial gain. The Royal National Park, for instance, is threatened by proposed vast urban expansion at Helensburgh.

Barry's other interests include architecture, historic art, listening to modern music and reading diverse books—particularly fantasy and classic horror.

Rod Turner says he wavered for many years between his love of secondary-school teaching and his love of the outdoors and introducing people to it. He worked for Outward Bound before attending, in 1979, the National Outdoor Leadership School, in Wyoming, USA. In 1980 he joined a small local adventure travel organization, eventually becoming its manager. In addition he has been an experimental education adviser, taught in secondary schools for seven years, and for the last three years has managed the well-known Sydney outdoor shop, Mountain Equipment. He has climbed in a number of countries and 'done the usual range of walks and activities that south-east Australian walkers do'.

These notes describe writers and photographers whose first contribution to *Wild* appears in this issue. Brief notes at the conclusion of articles and features by contributors whose work has been previously published in *Wild* include reference to the issue in which it first appeared.

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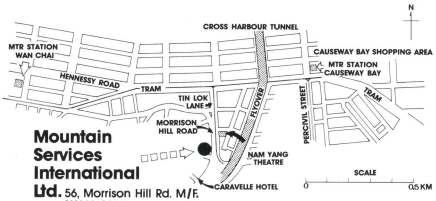

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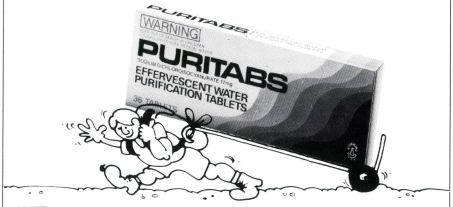

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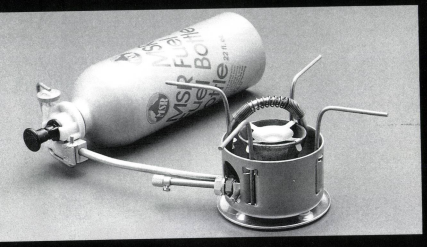

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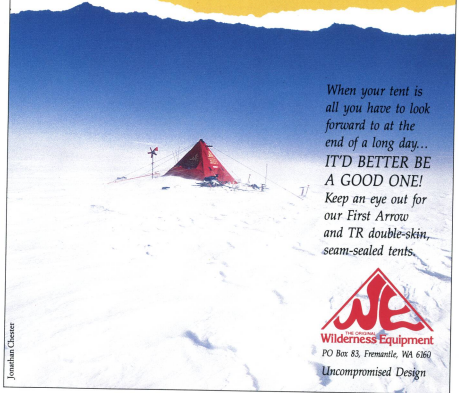
'ONE function of a tent is to keep out rain, but we were now beginning to suspect that the makers of our tents were not aware of this. Every seam dripped, and, where the guys joined the fabric, rivers flowed out to collect on the floor into young lakes, which were summarily dealt with by stabbing a hole in the ground-sheet with a knife.'

H W Tilman, THE ASCENT OF NANDA DEVI



Jonathan Chester

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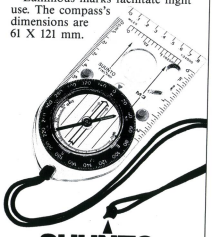
The capsule is the same as in the Suunto MC-1 and, thanks to the unique bearing mechanism, dirt that may have lodged is discarded when the capsule rotates. The M-3 is also available with a declination correction scale (M-3 D).

Luminous marks facilitate night use. The compass's dimensions are 61 X 121 mm.



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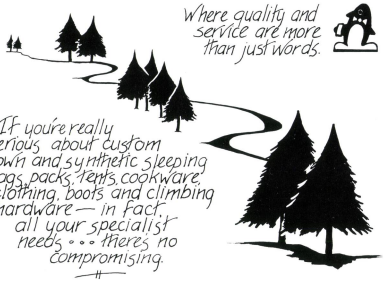

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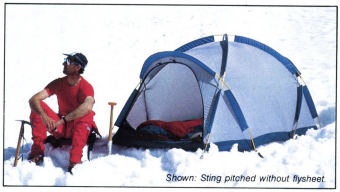
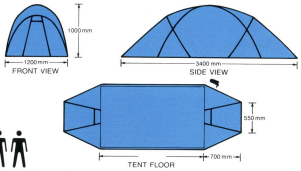


Shown: Sting pitched without flysheet



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What they don't know won't hurt them. Gardens of Stone, Blue Mountains, NSW. David Horan

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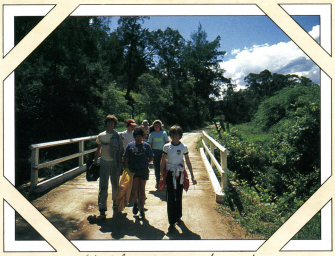

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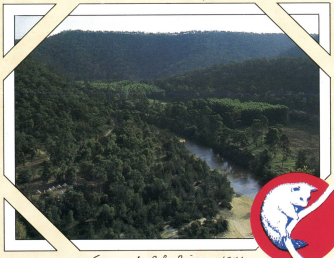

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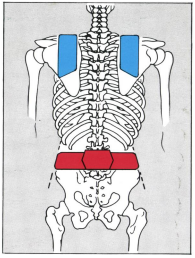

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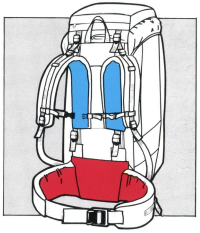
The lumbar pad is of specific shape and softness to fit the lumbar area firmly yet with minimal heat build up. In conjunction with the anatomically designed hip belt wings which incorporate a tri-laminate foam for better support, the lumbar pad provides vital support for the lower back.

The scapular pads are designed for contact with the best load bearing areas of the upper back whilst allowing maximum air circulation through the airflow chimney, again to minimise heat build up and increase comfort.

The harness and scapular pads are mounted on a frame of two parallel malleable aluminium bars and adjustment of the back length can be achieved without removing the sac. To adjust all S.A. harness systems no special tools are required, and the hip belt is in a fixed position to give good lumbar support and hip loading.



The S.A.(i) on the move adjustment system is fitted to Condor, Jaguar 'S' and Jaguar 'E' models. Call and see them at your nearest specialist retailer.

KARRIMOR
EQUIPMENT *for* ADVENTURE

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